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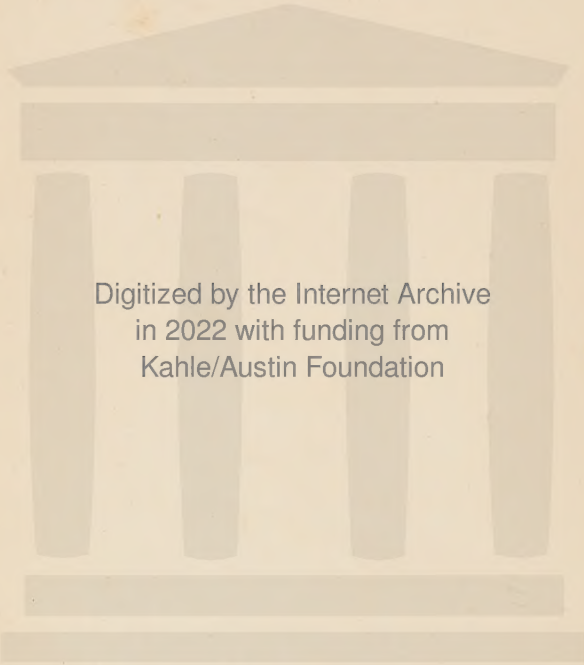
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THE
EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

*A Series of Simple Expositions
of
Portions of the New Testament*

BY THE
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St. Paul's
Epistle to the Ephesians

A Practical Exposition

BY THE

RIGHT REV. CHARLES GORE, M.A., D.D.

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TO
JAMES L. HOUGHTELING

OF CHICAGO

THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE BROTHERHOOD

OF ST. ANDREW

AND TO ALL THE BROTHERHOOD

WHICH IN MORE SENSES THAN ONE

HE REPRESENTS

PREFACE



THE favourable reception accorded to an exposition of the Sermon on the Mount has encouraged me to attempt another practical explanation of a portion of the New Testament, in the interest of such readers as are intelligent indeed, but neither are nor hope to become critical scholars. An immense deal has been done of late to assist New Testament scholarship, but while the studies of the scholar make progress, the ordinary Christian 'reading of the Bible' is, I fear, at best at a standstill. This little book then is intended to make one of St. Paul's epistles as intelligible as may be to the ordinary reader, and so to enable him to make a practical religious use of it, 'to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest' it.

The method pursued, in the main, has been to let each section of the epistle be preceded by an analysis or paraphrase of the teaching it contains, in which it is hoped that no element in the teaching is left unnoticed, and followed by such further explanations of particular phrases, or practical reflections, as seem to be needed.

I have avoided as far as possible all discussion of rival views, and given simply what are, in my judgement, the best explanations.

I have ventured to dedicate this book to the President of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, because (see app. note D, p. 264) that society represents surely a brave attempt to realize some of the chief practical lessons which this epistle is intended to enforce.

CHARLES GORE.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY,
Christmas, 1897.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS



Introduction.

i.

THERE are two great rivers of Europe which, in their course, offer a not un instructive analogy to the Church of God. The Rhine and the Rhone both take their rise from mountain glaciers, and for the first hundred or hundred and fifty miles from their sources they run turbid as glacier streams always are, and for the most part turbulent as mountain torrents. Then they enter the great lakes of Constance and Geneva. There, as in vast settling-vats, they deposit all the discolouring elements which have hitherto defiled their waters, so that when they re-emerge from the western ends of the lakes to run their courses in central and southern Europe their

waters have a translucent purity altogether delightful to contemplate. After this the two rivers have very different destinies, but either from fouler affluents or from the commercial activity upon their surfaces or along their banks they lose the purity which characterized their second birth, and become as foul as ever they were among their earlier mountain fastnesses; till after all vicissitudes they lose themselves to north or south in the vast and cleansing sea.

The history of these rivers offers, I say, a remarkable parallel to the history of the Church of God. For that too takes its rude and rough beginnings high up in wild and remote fastnesses of our human history. Such books of the Old Testament as those of Judges and Samuel and Kings represent the turbid and turbulent running of this human nature of ours, divinely directed indeed, but still unpurified and unregenerate. But in the great lake of the humanity of Jesus all its acquired pollution is cut off. In Him, virgin-born, our manhood is seen as indeed the pure mirror of the divine glory; and when at Pentecost the Church of God issues anew, by a second birth of that glorified manhood, for its second course in this world, it issues unmixed with alien influences, substan-

tially pure and unsullied. After a time its history gains in complexity but its character loses in purity, so that there are epochs of the history of the Church when its moral level is possibly not higher than that which is represented in the roughest books of the Old Testament: and through the whole of its later history the Church is strangely fused with the world again, until they issue both together into eternity.

Men from all parts of the world visit Constance and Geneva, and delight to look at the two famous rivers issuing pure and abundant from the quiet lakes. An analogous pleasure belongs to the study of such books of the New Testament as the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, which give us respectively the fortunes and the theory of the Church at its origin. Later epochs of Church history have possibly more richly diversified interests—such as the period of the Councils, or the Middle Ages, or the Reformation. But the interest of the earliest Church unmixed with the world, its principles fresh, its inspirations strong, its native hue free from discolouring elements, preoccupies us with a fascination which is unrivalled. The divine society is young and inexperienced, but what it is and is meant

to be we can see there better than anywhere else. We return, when our minds are aching and our eyes are dim with the complexity and obscurity of our latter-day problem, to learn insight and simplicity again at those pure sources.

And to the Christian believer these books are not only documents of great historical importance as illustrative of a unique period: they also represent to us in different forms the highest level of that action of the divine Spirit upon the mind of man which we call inspiration. St. Paul for instance, in this Epistle to the Ephesians claims, as we shall find, to be an 'inspired' man, a recipient of divine revelation, and makes a similar claim for the apostles and prophets generally. 'By revelation,' he says, 'God made known unto me the mystery (or divine secret), as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.' Inspiration is a term not easily susceptible of definition. We are inclined in our generation to recognize its limits more frankly than has been done in the past, and

its compatibility even with positive error on subjects which are matter of ordinary human inquiry and not of divine revelation¹; but its positive meaning in the region of divine revelation—in what concerns God's moral will, purpose, character and being, and the consequent moral and spiritual significance of our human life—ought not to be less apparent to us than formerly. Thus when we call a writer of the New Testament 'inspired' we must mean at least this: that the same divine Spirit who put the message of God in the hearts of the prophets of old, and who worked His perfect work without let and hindrance in the manhood of Christ, is here so working upon the will and imagination, the memory and intelligence, of one of Christ's commissioned witnesses as that he shall interpret and not misinterpret the mind and person of his Master. Practically, an inspired writer of the New Testament means a writer under whom we can put ourselves to school to 'learn Christ' with

¹ The Committee of the Conference of Bishops at Lambeth, 1897, in a report commended by the bishops as a body to the 'consideration of all Christian people,' write: 'Your committee do not hold that a true view of Holy Scripture forecloses any legitimate question about the literary character or literal accuracy of different parts or statements of the Old Testament.'

whole-hearted confidence and faith. This, of course, gives an additional reason of the most cogent force why we should continually recur to the sacred books of the New Testament. If Christianity is to be deterred from a fatal return to nature—that is to the religious or irreligious tendencies of mankind when left to itself—or if it is to be recalled when it has lapsed, this can only be by an appeal to Scripture constantly reiterated and pressed home. There is for ever the testing-ground alike of doctrine, of moral character, and of ecclesiastical tendency; there is the only perfect image of the mind of Christ.

ii.

The Epistle to the Ephesians gives us St. Paul's gospel of the Catholic Church. So far from being a man of one idea, St. Paul fascinates and sometimes bewilders us by the intricacy and variety of his thoughts; but like the innumerable leaves and twigs of some finely-grown tree which emerge, all of them, through branches and boughs, out of one great trunk, strong and straight, and one deep and firmly-set root, so it is with the infinitely various topics and suggestions of St. Paul. They run back

into a few dominant thoughts, which in their turn have one trunk-line of developement and one root. The root is the conviction, finally smitten into the soul of St. Paul at the moment of his conversion on the road to Damascus, that Jesus is the Christ; and the trunk-line of development is that which is involved in St. Paul's special commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, that is to say, the principle that the Christ is the saviour of Gentiles as of Jews and on an equal basis—or in other words, that the Christian church is catholic.

When St. Paul acknowledged that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, this of course meant that he remained no less than formerly an adherent of the Jewish faith, and that he 'worshipped' without any breach of continuity, 'the God of his fathers.' So he is fond of insisting¹. Thus to him the Church of Christ is still 'the commonwealth of Israel,' God's ancient church, though reconstructed². For the religion of Israel had had for its main motive the hope of the Christ. All that St. Paul now believed was that this hope had been realized, and realized to the shame of Israel in One whom they had rejected

¹ Acts xxiv. 14; xxvi. 6, 7, 22, 23; 2 Tim. i. 3.

² Eph. ii. 12-19.

and crucified. But if to believe that Jesus was the Christ involved no breach with the religion of Israel, yet it did involve the recognition that it had been reconstituted on a new basis, and in a way that suggested to existing Israelites nothing less than a revolution. The church of God had, in St. Paul's present belief, widened out from being the church of one nation into being a catholic society, a society for all mankind.

If St. Paul's epistles are taken in those groups into which they naturally divide themselves, we find that in the first group, that of the two epistles to the Thessalonians, all his favourite topics are present as it were in the germ, but nothing that is specially characteristic of him is yet developed. The free admission of the Gentiles into the Church is, with the accompanying hostility of the Jews, assumed¹, but not much insisted upon; but in the interval between these epistles and that to the Galatians the subject had gained fresh and poignant interest. A party of Christians having their centre at Jerusalem had been trying—in spite of the decision of the apostolic council at Jerusalem—to reimpose upon the consciences of

¹ 1 Thess. ii. 14-16.

Gentile Christians, and with especial success in the Galatian province, the obligation of circumcision; or in other words had been trying to make it evident that the Church of God was as much as ever the people of the Jews, and that Gentiles could only become Christians by becoming also Jewish proselytes pledged to keep the law of Moses. In view of this attempt St. Paul re-embarks upon his great campaign for the catholicity of the Church, and in his epistles of the second group¹ (especially those to the Galatians and the Romans) the catholicity of Christianity is vindicated controversially upon the basis of the principle of *justification by faith, not by works of the law*.

The meaning and real importance of this doctrine ought not to be hard for us to understand. To be justified means to be accepted or acquitted by God. The Judaizers—that is the Christian representatives of the narrower religious spirit of Israel—held that, as God's covenant was with the Jews only, so men could obtain acceptance simply by the observance of that Mosaic law which was to the Jew at once the expression of the divine selection of his race, and the grounds of his arrogant

¹ Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans.

contempt for all who had not 'Abraham to their father¹.' But St. Paul had made trial of that theory, and had found it wanting. The observance of the law and the glorying in Jewish privileges had brought him no peace with God: had in fact served only to produce and deepen a sense of inner alienation from God and conviction of sin. Thus in acknowledging the messiahship of that Jesus whom the chosen people had rejected and surrendered to be crucified, he was abandoning utterly and for ever the standing-ground of Jewish pride: he was acknowledging that the only divine function of the law was to convince men of sin, and of their need of pardon and salvation: he was taking his stand as a sinner among the Gentiles, and humbly welcoming the unmerited boon of pardon and acceptance from the hand of the divine mercy in Christ Jesus. When St. Paul in familiar arguments, from the witness of the Old Testament itself, and from the moral experience of men, convicts the law of inadequacy as an instrument of justification, his reasoning is full of a strong feeling and conviction bred of his own experiences. The true means of justification, he has come to perceive, is faith, that is,

¹ See app. note C, p. 257.

the simple acceptance of the divine favour freely offered, and this is something that belongs to no special race, but to all men as such. For all men everywhere, to whom the light comes, can know that they are sinners in the sight of God, and can accept simply from the hand of the divine bounty the unmerited boon of forgiveness and acceptance in Christ. Thus, if faith and faith alone is that whereby men are justified or commended to God, then at once the catholic basis of the reconstituted Church is secured. All men can belong to it who can feel their need and hear the Gospel and take God at His word. This is the great principle vindicated in the compressed and fiery arguments of the Epistle to the Galatians, and then subsequently developed in the calmer and orderly procedure of the Epistle to the Romans.

But in the next group of epistles, written out of that captivity at Rome the record of which closes the Acts of the Apostles, the same doctrine of the catholicity of the Church is developed from a different point of view. Now it is the thought of the person of Christ which has come to occupy the foreground. All along St. Paul had believed that Christ was the Son of God, the divine mediator of creation, who in these

latter days had for our sakes humbled Himself to be made man¹. But this thought of Christ's person is elaborated and brought into prominence in the third group of epistles², especially in the Epistle to the Colossians. A tendency derived from Jewish sources was manifesting itself among some of the Asiatic Christians to exalt angelic beings, conceived probably as representing divine attributes and powers, into objects of religious worship³. There is a certain spurious humility which has in many ages, and not least in the Christian Church, led men to shrink from direct approach to the high and holy God and to resort to lower mediators, as more suitable to their defiled condition and weakness. This sort of spurious humility was already detected by St. Paul, in company with other Judaizing and falsely ascetic tendencies, as a peril of the Asiatic churches, and especially of the Colossians.

But he will make no terms with it. Christ he teaches is the only and the universal mediator, the one and only reconciler of all things to the Father. And He is this because of the

¹ Acts ix. 20; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Rom. ix. 5; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Gal. iv. 4.

² Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon.

³ Col. ii. 18: 'by a voluntary humility (or 'taking delight in humility') and worshipping of the angels.'

position that belongs to His person in the universe as a whole. He, as the Father's image or counterpart, is His unique agent in all the work of creation. All created things whatever, from the lowest to the highest, seen or unseen, be they thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, are the work of His hand. All were created through Him and have Him for their end or goal, and He is the sustaining life of the whole universe in all its parts. 'In Him all things consist' or have their unity in a system. And because He occupies this position in the whole universe, therefore a similar position and sovereignty belong to Him in the spiritual kingdom of redemption. There too He is, through His manhood and His sacrificial death upon the cross, the unique author of the reconciliation with God. He is by His spirit the inherent life of the redeemed, and the goal of all their perfecting. There is, in fact, no divine quality, or attribute, or activity of God towards His creatures which is not His. In Him it pleased the Father that all the fulness of divine attributes and offices should dwell, and in Him as Son of God made man dwells all this fulness bodily. The divine attributes, that is, are not committed to a number of different mediators.

They exist and are exercised in Him and in Him alone. It follows therefore as a matter of course from this position of Christ in the universe and in the church that the redemption effected by Him must be universal in range and must extend equally and impartially to all. There 'cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, but Christ is all and in all.'

Thus in the Epistle to the Colossians¹ the doctrine of the catholicity of Christianity is again vindicated controversially, and logically based upon the catholic character of Christ and upon His universal function in creation and redemption; and in the contemporary Epistle to the Ephesians, without note of controversy, the doctrine of the catholic church, the brotherhood of all men in Christ, the doctrine which is, we may truly say, the culmination of all St. Paul's teaching, is allowed to develop itself in all its glory on the assumed basis of that teaching about Christ's person which had made any narrower idea of the church already seem incongruous and impossible. In the earlier dispensation in which the covenant of God was with one people, St. Paul can see only a preparatory process through

¹ See i. 13-20; ii. 2, 3, 9-23; iii. 11. Cf. i. 27-28.

which the eternal purpose of God could at last be realized, and out of which His eternal secret could at last be disclosed. That purpose so long kept secret, and now revealed, is to gather together all nations and classes of men into the one Church of God, one organized body, one brotherhood in which all men are to find their salvation, and through which is to be realized an even wider purpose for the whole universe. In this doctrine of the catholic church St. Paul finds the expression of all the length and breadth and height and depth of the divine love. Its length, for it represents an age-long purpose slowly worked out ; its breadth, for it is a society of all men and for the whole universe ; its depth, for God has reached a hand of mercy down to the lowest gulfs of sin and alienation from God ; its height, for in this society men are carried up into nothing less than union with God, to no lower seat than the heavenly places in Christ.

I have spoken of St. Paul's great arguments for the catholicity of the Gospel as two. The first appears mainly as a polemic against the idea of justification by works of the law. The second as a positive argument about the person of Christ and the results which flow from the right appreciation of it. But in fact there is

a necessary connexion between the two. The narrow Judaism of the Galatian reactionaries did in fact logically involve a narrow and therefore a false conception of the person of Christ. As Dr. Hort expresses it¹, 'to accept Jesus as the Christ without any adequate enlargement of what was included in the Messiahship could hardly fail to involve either limitation of His nature to the human sphere, or at most a counting Him among the angels.' This logical connexion was in fact verified in history. The Judaizers of the earliest period of Christian history who insisted on circumcision for all Christians pass into the Ebionites of the second century who rejected the Church's doctrine of the person of Christ, as the eternal Son of God. And conversely it would be scarcely possible to accept the doctrine of the universal Christ, both divine and human, as St. Paul developes it, without perceiving that men must be made acceptable to Him and to His Father by something deeper and wider than any particular set of observances or 'works.' The relation therefore between the argument of St. Paul's epistles to the Galatians and the Romans on the one side, and that of his epistles to the Colossians and

¹ Hort, *Judaistic Christianity* (Macmillan, 1894), p. 125.

the Ephesians on the other is one of unity rather than of contrast.

The relation of these two groups of epistles may be expressed also in another way. The argument of the earlier epistles is directed towards the Judaizers. Its purpose is to vindicate the right of the Gentiles to an equal place and position with the Jews in the kingdom of God. But at the time of the later group this right had been secured. On the basis of their acknowledged title the ingress of Gentiles into the churches of Asia had been even alarmingly rapid. Now it is time for St. Paul to address himself to these emancipated Gentiles and to exhort them in their turn not to relapse into unworthy and narrow conceptions of their redeemer, or into conduct unworthy of their new position: they must 'walk worthily of the vocation wherewith they are called.'

Our present political situation in England offers an analogy which may bring home to us the position of the Gentile Christians and the function of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The time is past for us when there is any necessity to contend that a vote should be given to all responsible men. So far at least as the male population is concerned, the title of the citizen

to the vote has been substantially acknowledged; but the time is by no means past when the newly enfranchised citizens need to be stimulated to realize what their enfranchisement carries with it of privilege and responsibility. And we may express this by saying that if our English political Epistle to the Galatians has been written and has done its work, our Epistle to the Ephesians is still surely very much needed.

It is very strange, or at least would be strange if we were not acquainted with the historical circumstances that have accounted for it, that St. Paul has been, out of all proportion to the facts of the case, identified in popular estimation with only the earlier of the two great arguments described above, with that which has given the basis to Protestantism, and not that which is, in fact, the charter of the Catholic Church.

We are all familiar with the fact that St. Paul taught the doctrine of justification by faith, and insisted therefore on the necessity and privilege of personal acceptance on the part of each individual of the promises of God in Christ. We all know how, when this aspect of things has been ignored and over-ridden—when an almost Jewish doctrine of the merit of good works¹

¹ Cf. app. note C. p. 257.

has been current in Christendom—it has afforded a pretext for a Protestant reaction of the most individualistic kind, of the kind which pays no regard to outward unity or catholic authority. But certainly in St. Paul's own teaching there is nothing individualistic in justifying faith. It is that by which man wins admittance into the body of Christ; and the body of Christ is an organized society, a catholic brotherhood. Salvation, as we shall see, is as much social or ecclesiastical as it is individual; and perhaps there is nothing more wanted to correct our ideas of what St. Paul understood by justifying faith than an impartial study of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is true that this great epistle only freely develops thoughts which were already unmistakably in St. Paul's mind when he wrote his epistles to the Corinthians, and even those to the Thessalonians. Already the social organization of the Church is a prominent topic, and the ethics of Christianity are social ethics. But now, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the idea of the Church has become the dominant idea, and the ethical teaching can be justly characterized in no other way than as a Christian socialism.

iii.

But it is time to examine somewhat more closely the circumstances under which St. Paul wrote this epistle and their bearing upon its contents. It was written by him during that imprisonment at Rome¹ the record of which brings to an end the Acts of the Apostles. He can therefore put into his appeals all the force which naturally belongs to one who has sacrificed himself for his principles. 'I, Paul,' he writes, 'the prisoner of Jesus Christ, on behalf of you Gentiles.' He speaks of himself as 'an ambassador in a chain' bound, as he was no doubt, to the soldier which kept him. But the fact that he is a prisoner does not occupy a great place in his mind. In part this is because his imprisonment was not of a highly restrictive character. The Acts conclude by telling us that he was allowed to dwell in his own hired dwelling and to receive all that came to him without let or hindrance to his preaching. And the tone of the 'epistles of the first captivity' is cheerful as to the present and hopeful for the future². But it is more important to notice that

¹ Cf. Hort, *Prolegomena to Romans and Ephesians* (Macmillan, 1895), p. 100.

² Col. iv. 2-4; Philemon 22; Phil. i. 12-14.

the thought of being in prison is apparently swallowed up in St. Paul's imagination by other considerations. For, in the first place, St. Paul was, under whatever restraints, at Rome. He had reached his goal—a new centre of evangelization which was also the centre of the world. Step by step the centre of Christian evangelization had passed toward Rome as its goal. From Jerusalem, which told unmistakably that 'the salvation was of the Jews,' it had moved to Antioch, where in a Greek city Jew met Gentile on equal terms. From Antioch, under St. Paul's leadership, it had passed to Corinth and Ephesus. These were indeed thoroughly Gentile cities, and leading cities of the Empire, but they were provincial. No imperial movement could rest satisfied till it established itself at the centre of the great imperial organization—till it had got to Rome.

If we are to understand at all adequately the world in which St. Paul wrote, the thought of the Roman Empire and of the unity which it was giving the world must be clearly before our minds: and it will not be a digression if we pause to dwell upon it at this point when we are considering the significance of St. Paul's situation as at once a prisoner and an evangelist in the great capital.

The Roman Empire brought the world, that is the whole of the known world which was thought worth considering, into a great unity of government. What had once been independent kingdoms had now become provinces of the empire, and the whole of the Roman policy was directed towards drawing closer the unity, and educating the provinces in Roman ideas¹.

If we seek to define Roman unity a little more closely the following elements will be found perhaps the most important for our purpose. (1) It was a unity of government strongly centralized at Rome in the person of the emperor. The letters of a provincial governor like Pliny to his master Trajan at Rome reveal to us how even trivial matters, such as the formation of a guild of firemen in Pliny's province of Bithynia, were referred up to the emperor. Roman government was in fact personal and centralized in a very complete sense, and had the uniformity which accompanies such a condition. (2) This centralized personal government is, of course, only possible where there is a well-organized system of inter-communication between the widely-separated parts of a great

¹ Ramsay, *Paul the Traveller* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1895), pp. 130 ff.

empire. And there was this to an amazing extent in the Roman empire. We find evidence of it in the great roads representing a highly developed system of travelling. 'It is not too much to say that travelling was more highly developed and the dividing power of distance was weaker under the Empire than at any time before or since until we come down to the present century.' This is what gives such a modern and cosmopolitan flavour to the lives of men of the Empire as unlike one another in other respects as Strabo and Jerome. We find the evidence of such a system of inter-communication also, and not less impressively, in the multiplied proofs afforded to us that every movement of thought in the Empire must needs pass to Rome and establish itself there. The rapid arrival of all oriental tendencies or beliefs at Rome was, of course, what from the point of view of conservative Romans meant the destruction of all that they valued in character and ideals. 'The Orontes had poured itself into the Tiber.' But it was none the less a fact of the utmost significance for the world's progress. (3) The unity of the Empire depended largely on the use which was made of Greek civilization and Greek language. The Empire

may be rightly described, if we are considering its eastern half, as Greek no less than Roman from the first. Everywhere it was the Greek language which was the instrument of Roman government, and Greek civilization, tempered by somewhat barbarous Roman 'games,' which was put into competition with local customs whether social or religious¹. (4) Lastly, to a very real extent the Empire was aiming at the establishment of a universal religion. Independent local gods and local cults suited well enough a number of independent little tribes and kingdoms, but it was felt instinctively that the one empire involved also one religion, and with more or less of deliberate intention the one religion was provided in the worship of the emperor, or, perhaps we should say, of the Empire.

This worship of the emperor has been among us a very byword for what is monstrous and unintelligible. It bewilders us when we hear of something like it in our own Indian empire. And yet a little imagination ought to show us that where a pure monotheism has not taught men the moral purity and personal character of God—where religion is either pantheism, the deification of the one life, or idolatry, the deifica-

¹ Ramsay, *l. c.* p. 132.

tion of separate forms of life—the worship of the imperial authority is intelligible enough. Here was a vast power, universal in its range, mostly beneficent, and yet awful in its limitless and arbitrary power of chastisement; what should it be but divine, like nature, and an object to be appealed to, propitiated, worshipped? At any rate the cultus of the emperor spread in the Roman world, and particularly in the Asiatic provinces. It could ally itself with the current pantheistic philosophy and also with popular local cults: for it was tolerant of all and could embrace them all, or in some cases it could identify itself with them—the emperor being regarded as a special manifestation of the local god. And it made itself popular through games—wild beast shows and gladiatorial contests—which it was the business of its high priests or presidents to provide or to organize. Thus it was that the Roman world came to be organized by provinces for the purposes of the imperial religion, and the provincial presidents, whom we hear of in the Acts as ‘Asiarchs’ or ‘chiefs of Asia,’ and from other sources as existing in the other provinces—Galatarchs, Bithyniarchs, Syriarchs, and so on—were also the high priests of the worship of the Caesars, by which it was sought

to make religion, like everything else, contribute to cement imperial unity¹.

Now there can be no doubt at all, if we look back from the fourth or fifth centuries of our era, to how vast an extent this Roman unity had been made an engine for the propagation of the Church. And the Christians—the Spanish poet Prudentius, for instance, or Pope Leo the Great²—betray a strong consciousness of the place held by the empire in the divine preparation for Christ. For long periods the Roman authority was tolerant of Christianity and suffered its propagation to go on in peace; and at the times when it became alarmed at its subversive tendencies, and turned to become its persecutor, still the Church could not be prevented from using the imperial organization, its roads and its means of communication. Again, every step in the progress of the Greek language facilitated the spread of the new religion, the propagation of which was through Greek; and conversely Christianity became an instrument for spreading the use of this language which previously was making but a poor struggle against the languages

¹ See Mommsen, *Provinces of Roman Empire* (Eng. trans.), i. 344 ff.; Lightfoot, *Ign. and Polyc.* iii. pp. 404 ff.

² App. note A, p. 251.

of Asia Minor; for it is apparently a simple mistake to suppose that even the apostles were miraculously dispensed from the difficulties of acquiring new languages, and were enabled to speak all languages as it were by instinct. Even the imperial religion provided a framework to facilitate the organization of that still more imperial religion which it found indeed absolutely incompatible with its prerogatives, but in which it might have found an efficient substitute to accomplish its own best ends. Thus the early Christian apologist Tatian pleads that Christianity alone could supply what was manifestly needed for a united world, a universal moral law and a universal gratuitous education or philosophy, open to rich and poor, men and women, alike¹. So strong in fact was in many respects the affinity of the Empire and the Church that the apologists are not infrequently able to claim, and that plausibly, that if the Roman authorities were ready to recognize it, they would find in the Church their most efficient ally.

And there is no doubt that all this tendency to use the empire as the ally and instrument of the Church began with St. Paul. The closer St. Paul's evangelistic travels are examined the

¹ Tatian, *Ad Graecos*, 28, 32.

more apparent does it become that he, the apostle who was also the Roman citizen, was by the very force of circumstances, but also probably deliberately, working the Church on the lines of the empire. 'The classification adopted in Paul's own letters of the churches which he founded, is according to provinces—Achaia, Macedonia, Asia, and Galatia; the same fact is clearly visible in the narrative of Acts. It guides and inspires the expressions from the time when the apostle landed at Perga. At every step any one who knows the country recognizes that the Roman division is implied¹. Nor can we fail to be struck with the regularity with which St. Paul, wherever he mentions the Empire, takes it on its best side and represents it as a divine institution whose officers are God's ministers for justice and order and peace². It is from this point of view alone that he will have Christians think of it and pray for it³. There is the confidence of the true son of the empire in his 'I appeal unto Caesar'⁴.'

Further than this, when St. Paul is addressing himself to Gentiles who had received no leavening of Jewish monotheism, it is most striking

¹ Ramsay, *l. c.* p. 135.

² Rom. xiii. 1-7; cf. ii. Thess. ii. 6.

³ 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

⁴ Acts xxv. 12.

how he throws himself back on those common philosophical and religious ideas which were permeating the thought of the Empire. 'The popular philosophy inclined towards pantheism, the popular religion was polytheistic, but Paul starts from the simplest platform common to both. There exists something in the way of a divine nature which the religious try to please and the philosophers try to understand¹.' Close parallels to St. Paul's language in his two recorded speeches at Lystra and at Athens, can be found in the writings of the contemporary Stoic philosopher Seneca², and in the so-called 'Letters of Heracleitus' written by some philosophic student nearly contemporary with St. Paul at Ephesus³. In exposing the folly of idolaters he was only doing what a contemporary philosopher was doing also, and repeating ideas which he might have learnt almost as readily in the schools of his native city Tarsus—which Strabo speaks of as the most philosophical place in the world, and the place where philosophy was most of all an indigenous plant⁴—as at the

¹ Ramsay, *l. c.* p. 147.

² Lightfoot, *Galatians*, 'St. Paul and Seneca,' pp. 287 ff.

³ See app. note B, p. 253.

⁴ 'The zeal of its inhabitants for philosophy and general culture is such that they have surpassed even Athens and Alexandria and

feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem. Certainly Paul the apostle to the Gentiles was also Saul of Tarsus and the citizen of the Roman Empire in whose mind the idea and sentiment of the empire lay already side by side with the idea of the catholic church.

Such a statement as has just been given of the relation of the Roman organization to the Church is undoubtedly true. And it is also indisputable that St. Paul was in fact the pioneer in using the empire for the purposes of the Church. But it is more questionable to what extent the idea of the empire as the handmaid of the Church was consciously and deliberately, or only unconsciously or instinctively, present to his mind ; and in particular it is questionable how far the peculiar exaltation of the epistles of the first captivity is due to St. Paul's realization that in getting to Rome, the capital and centre of the Empire, he had reached a goal which was

all other cities where schools of philosophy can be mentioned. And its pre-eminence in this respect is so great because there the students are all townspeople, and strangers do not readily settle there.' Strabo, xiv. v. 13. I do not suppose that St. Paul received any formal education in Greek schools at Tarsus. But I think we must assume that at some period St. Paul had sufficient contact with Gentile educated opinion, whether at Tarsus or elsewhere, to be acquainted with widely-spread religious and philosophical tendencies.

also a fresh and unique starting-point for the evangelization of the world.

To some extent this must certainly have been the case¹. While he is at Ephesus² preaching, he already has Rome in view, and a sense of unaccomplished purpose till he has visited it, 'I must also see Rome.' When a little later he writes to the Romans, the name of Rome is a name both of attraction and of awe. He is eager to go to Rome, but he seems to fear it at the same time. So much as in him lies, he is ready to preach the gospel to them also that are at Rome. Even in face of all that that imperial name means, he is not ashamed of the Gospel³.

Later the divine vision at Jerusalem assures him that, as he has borne witness concerning Christ at Jerusalem, so he must bear witness also at Rome⁴. The confidence of this divine purpose mingles with and reinforces the confidence of the Roman citizen in his appeal to Caesar. The sense of the divine hand upon him to take him to Rome is strengthened by another vision amid the terrors of the sea voyage⁵. At his first contact with the Roman

¹ Cf. Hort, *Christian Ecclesia*, p. 143.

² Acts xix. 21.

³ Rom. i. 15, 16.

⁴ Acts xxiii. 11.

⁵ Acts xxvii. 24.

brethren 'he thanked God and took courage ¹.' This sense of thankfulness and encouragement pervades the whole of the first captivity so far as it is represented in his letters. He had reached the goal of his labours and a fresh starting-point for a wide-spreading activity.

Certainly no one can mistake the glow of enthusiasm which pervades the epistles of the first captivity generally, but especially the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is conspicuously, and beyond all the other epistles, rapturous and uplifted. And this is not due—as is the cheerful thankfulness of the Epistle to the Philippians, at least in part—to the specially intimate relations of St. Paul to the congregations he was addressing, or to the specially satisfactory character of their Christian life. On the contrary, St. Paul perceived that the Asiatic churches, and especially Ephesus, were threatened by very ominous perils. 'Very grievous wolves were entering in, not sparing the flock; and among themselves men were arising, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them ².' St. Paul's rapturous tone must be accounted for by causes independent of the Ephesian or Asiatic Christians in particular.

¹ Acts xxviii. 15.

² Acts xx. 29, 30.

Among these causes, as we have just seen, must be reckoned the fact, the significance of which we have been dwelling upon, that St. Paul had now reached Rome, the centre of the Gentile world. But it must also be remembered that St. Paul had seen a great conflict fought out and won for the catholicity of Christianity, and that now for the first time there was a pause and freedom to take advantage of it.

A great conflict had been fought and won. The backbone of the earlier Jewish opposition to the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles on equal terms had been broken. They had in fact swept into the Church in increasing numbers. Their rights were recognized and their position uncontested. There is now, in the comparative quiet of the 'hired house' where St. Paul was confined, a period of pause in which he can fitly sum up the results which have been won, and let the full meaning of the catholic brotherhood be freely unfolded. It is time to pass from the rudiments of the Christian gospel, the vindication of its most elementary principles and liberties, the 'milk for babes,' to expound the spiritual wisdom of the full-grown Christian manhood, the 'solid meat for them of riper years.'

It is this sense of pause in conflict and free expansion in view of a vast opportunity, which in great part at least interprets the glow and glory of St. Paul's epistle.

iv.

The Epistle to the Ephesians might, so far as its contents are concerned, have been addressed to any of the predominantly Gentile churches; but to none more fitly than to Ephesus and to the churches of Asia, where the progress of Gentile Christianity had been so rapid, and where St. Paul's ministry had been so unusually prolonged. Let us attempt to answer the questions—what was Ephesus? what was the history, and what were the circumstances of the Ephesian church?

Ephesus had a double importance as a Greek and as an Asiatic city. A colony of Ionians from Athens had early settled on some hills which rose out of a fertile plain near the mouth of the Cayster. This was the origin of the Greek city of Ephesus. Its position gave it admirable commercial advantages. It became the greatest mart of exchange¹ between East

¹ Among other articles of commerce, tents made in Ephesus had a special reputation, and St. Paul and Aquila had special opportunities there for the exercise of their trade. Acts xx. 34.

and West in Asia Minor, and though its commerce was threatened by the filling up of its harbour, it had not decayed in St. Paul's time.

Among Greek cities it also occupied a not inconspicuous place in the history of art, and at an earlier period of philosophy also. Here was one of the chief homes of the Homeric tradition; hence in the person of Callinus the Greek elegy is reputed to have had its origin, and in the person of Hipponax the satire. It was the home of Heracleitus, one of the greatest of the early philosophers, and of Apelles and Parrhasius, the masters of painting¹.

And the greatest artists in sculpture—Phidias and Polycletus, Scopas and Praxiteles—had adorned with their works the temple of Artemis, which, in itself one of the wonders of the world, the masterpiece of Ionic architecture, became also, like some great Christian cathedral, a very museum of sculpture and painting.

If Greek artists built and decorated the temple of Artemis, they attempted no doubt to represent the goddess under the form which her Greek name suggested, the beautiful huntress-goddess; but the Greeks never in fact succeeded in affect-

¹ Strabo. xiv. 1, 25.

ing the thoroughly Asiatic and oriental character of a worship which had nothing Greek about it except the name. The interest of Ephesus as an Asiatic city centred about that ancient worship which had its home in the plain below the Greek settlement. It was there before the Greeks came, it held its own throughout and in spite of all Greek and Roman influences; all through the history of Ephesus it gave its main character to the city—the noted home of superstition and sorcery.

The Artemis of Ephesus was, as Jerome remarks¹, not the huntress-goddess with her bow, but the many-breasted symbol of the productive and nutritive powers of nature, the mother of all life, free and untamed like the wild beasts who accompanied her. The grotesque and archaic idol believed to have fallen down from heaven was a stiff, erect mummy covered with many breasts and symbols of wild beasts. Her worship was organized by a hierarchy of eunuch priests—called by a Persian name Megabyzi—and ‘consecrated’ virgins. It was associated, like other worships of the same divinity called indifferently Artemis or Cybele or Ma, with ideals of life which from the point

¹ Migne, *P. L.* xxvi. 441.

of view of any fixed moral order, Roman or Greek no less than Jewish or Christian, was lawless and immoral.

It is very well known how the Asiatic nature-worships flooded the Roman empire, and even at Rome itself became by far more popular than the traditional state religion. And among these Asiatic worships none was more popular than the worship of Artemis of Ephesus, whose temple was the wonder of the world, and who not only was worshipped publicly at Ephesus, but was the object of a cult both public and private in widely-separated parts of the empire. Such a temple and such a worship would naturally collect a base and corrupt population; but what would in any case have been bad was rendered worse by the fact that the area round the temple was an asylum of refuge from the law, and that, as the area of 'sanctuary' was extended at different times, the collection of criminals became greater and greater. It had reached a point where it threatened the safety of the city, and not long before St. Paul's time the Emperor Augustus had found it necessary to curtail the area. The history of our own Westminster is enough to assure us that a religious asylum brings social degradation in its train.

Such was the commercial and religious importance of the beautiful, wealthy, effeminate, superstitious, and most immoral city which became for three years the centre of St. Paul's ministry. On his second missionary journey St. Paul was making his way to Asia, and no doubt to Ephesus, when he with his companions were hindered by the Holy Ghost and turned across the Hellespont to Macedonia¹. On his return to Syria, he could not be satisfied without at least setting foot in Ephesus and making a beginning of preaching there in the synagogue²; but he was hastening back to Jerusalem, and, with a promise of return, left his work there to Priscilla and Aquila. On his third missionary journey Ephesus was the centre of his prolonged work. It was accordingly the only city of the first rank which, so far as any trustworthy evidence goes, had as the founder of its Church in the strictest sense—that is, as the first gatherer of converts as well as organizer of institutions—either St. Paul or any other apostle³.

St. Paul's first activity on arriving at Ephesus illustrates the stress he laid on the gift of the Holy Ghost as the central characteristic of

¹ Acts xvi. 6-10.

² Acts xviii. 19.

³ Hort, *Prolegomena*, p. 83.

Christianity. He was brought in contact with the twelve imperfect disciples who had been baptized only with John the Baptist's baptism, and had not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost was given. St. Paul baptized them anew with Christian baptism, and bestowed upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of his hands¹. Then it is recorded how he began his preaching as usual with the Jews in the synagogue. The Jews of Asia Minor were regarded by the Jews of Jerusalem as corrupted and Hellenized². But at any rate they exhibited the same antagonism to the preaching of Christianity as their stricter brethren. Thus St. Paul, when he had given them their chance, abandoned their synagogue and established himself in the lecture-room of Tyrannus, where he taught for two years and more³. And this became the centre of an evangelization which, even if St. Paul himself did not visit other Asiatic towns, yet spread by the agency of his companions over the whole of the Roman pro-

¹ Acts xix. 1-7.

² Ramsay, *l. c.* p. 143.

³ 'From the fifth to the tenth hour' (11 a.m. to 4 p.m.), an early addition to the text of the Acts tells us; i. e. after work hours, when the school would naturally be vacant and St. Paul would have finished his manual labour at tent-making. Ramsay, *l. c.* p. 276.

vince of Asia—to the churches of the Lycus, Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and probably to the rest of the ‘seven churches’ to which St. John wrote in his Apocalypse.

Ephesus was full of superstitions of all sorts as would be expected, and St. Paul’s miracles were such as would not unnaturally have led the magicians to regard him as a greater master in their own craft. So among others the Jewish chief priest Sceva’s seven sons began to use the central name of Paul’s preaching as a new and most efficient formula for exorcism. ‘We adjure thee by Jesus whom Paul preaches.’ But it is frequently noticeable that St. Paul refused to allow himself to use superstition as a handmaid of religion. The providential disaster which befell these exorcists gave St. Paul an opportunity of striking an effective blow where it was most needed against exorcism and magic. The Christian converts came and confessed their participation in the black arts, and burnt their books of incantations, in spite of their value. The whole transaction must have impressed vividly in the minds of the Ephesians the contrast between Christianity and superstition.

St. Paul had already encountered opposition as well as success at Ephesus, for when, writing

from Ephesus, he speaks to the Corinthians¹ of having 'fought with beasts' there, the reference is probably to what had befallen him in the earlier part of his residence through the plots of the Jews; that long Epistle to the Corinthians can hardly have been written *after* the famous tumult recorded in the Acts. But that tumult, raised by the manufacturers of the silver shrines of Artemis, was of course the most important persecution which befell St. Paul at Ephesus. The narrative of it² is exceedingly instructive. We notice the friendliness of the Asiarchs, i.e. the presidents of the provincial 'union' and priests of the imperial worship, and the opinion of the town clerk, that St. Paul must be acquitted of any insults to the religious beliefs of the Ephesians³. Christianity had not, it appears, yet excited the antipathy of the religious or civil authorities of the Empire, but it had begun to threaten the pockets of those who were concerned in supplying the needs of the worshippers who thronged to the great

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 32.

² Acts xix. 23 ff.

³ Prof. Ramsay asserts that instead of 'robbers of temples' (Acts xix. 37), we should translate 'disloyal to the established government.' *l.c.* p. 282. But the word is used in the former sense in special connexion with Ephesus by Strabo, xiv. 1, 22, and Pseudo-Heracleitus, *Ep.* 7, p. 64 (Bernays).

temple at Ephesus. We need not inquire exactly how the little silver shrines of Artemis were used; but they were much sought after, and their production gave occupation to an important trade. The trade was threatened by the spread of Christianity. The philosophers despised indeed the idolatrous rites, but they despised also the people who practised them, and had no hope or idea of converting them¹. St. Paul was the first teacher at Ephesus who touched the fears of the idol makers by bringing a pure religion to the hearts of the ordinary people. Hence the tumult against the teachers of the new religion, raised not by the civil or religious authorities of Ephesus, but simply by the trade interest.

As soon as it was over St. Paul left Ephesus not to return there again. But on his way back to Jerusalem he came not to Ephesus but to Miletus, and sending for the Ephesian presbyters thither, he made them a farewell speech², which is in conspicuous harmony with the features of his later Epistle to the Ephesians. Already the doctrines of a divine purpose or

¹ See app. note B, p. 253, on the contemporary 'letters of Heracleitus.'

² Acts xx. 17 ff.

counsel now revealed, of the Church in general as the object of the divine self-sacrifice and love, and of the Holy Ghost as accomplishing her sanctification and developing her structure, appear to be prominent in his mind, and to have become familiar topics with the Ephesian Christians. 'I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. . . . And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.' These words from St. Paul's speech to the Ephesian presbyters are in remarkable affinity with the teaching of our epistle.

v.

We have been assuming that this epistle was addressed to Ephesus, but there are reasons to believe that it was not addressed to Ephesus only, but rather generally to the churches of the Roman province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the chief. The reasons for thinking this are

partly internal to the epistle. St. Paul's personal relations to individual Ephesian Christians must have been many and close, and we know his habit of introducing personal allusions and greetings into his epistles; but the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians is destitute of them altogether, contrasting in this respect even with the Epistle to the Colossians, written at the same time to a church which St. Paul himself never visited. This would be a most inexplicable fact if the Epistle to the Ephesians were really a letter to this one particular church. More than this, St. Paul speaks in several passages in a way which implies that he and those he wrote to were dependent on what they had heard for mutual knowledge—'having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you'—'if so be ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given me to youward.' Such language is much more natural if he is writing to others besides the Ephesians. And this evidence internal to the substance of the epistle coincides with evidence of the manuscripts. Very early manuscripts, some of those which remain to us and some which are reported to us by primitive scholars, omit the words 'in Ephesus' from St. Paul's opening greeting 'To the saints

and faithful brethren which are [in Ephesus].’ This fact, coupled with the absence of personal reminiscences in the epistle, has suggested the idea that it was in fact a circular letter to the saints and faithful brethren at a number of churches of the Roman province of Asia, and that where the words ‘in Ephesus’ stand in our text, there was perhaps a blank left in the epistle as St. Paul dictated it, which was intended to be filled up in each church where it was read. This is a view which has to a certain extent a special interest for us in Westminster because, if it was first suggested by the Genevan commentator Beza, it was elaborated by Archbishop Ussher, who is identified with our Abbey by residence and by the memorable record of his entombment in our abbey church with Anglican rites by the command of Cromwell. It follows naturally from such a view that when St. Paul writes to the Colossians and bids them send their letter to Laodicea, and read that which comes from Laodicea¹, the letter which they should expect from Laodicea would be none other than the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians which was to be read by them as well as the other Asiatic Christians.

¹ Col. iv. 16.

vi.

Enough perhaps has now been said to give a general idea of the conditions under which this great epistle was written ; and the topics of the epistle have been already indicated. Its central theme is that of the great catholic society, the renovated Israel, the Church of God. In this catholic brotherhood St. Paul sees the realization of an age-long purpose of God, the fulfilment of a long-secret counsel, now at last disclosed to His chosen prophets. He sees nothing incongruous in finding in the yet young and limited societies of Christian disciples the consummation of the divine purpose for the world, for these societies represent the breaking down of all barriers and the bringing of all men to unity with one another through a recovered unity with God, through Christ and in His Spirit. Therefore the work which the Church is to accomplish is nothing less than a universal work, a work not even limited to humanity ; it is the bringing back of all things visible or invisible into that unity which lies in God's original purpose of creation. St. Paul long ago had spoken to the Corinthians of a spiritual wisdom which they were not yet ready to listen

to. But now St. Paul seems to feel—for reasons which we have tried in part to interpret—that the time has come when all the depth and richness of the divine secret may be spoken out. No wonder that the subject stirs his imagination and gives to his whole tone an uplifting and a glory without parallel in his other writings. And yet it would be altogether false to attach to this epistle any associations such as are commonly connected with flights of imagination or the language of rhapsody. For the epistle has the most direct bearing on matters of practical life. If St. Paul glorifies the Christian ideal it is in order that all that weight of glory may be brought to bear upon the Asiatic Christians to force them to see that their personal and social conduct must have a purity, a liberality, a wisdom, a love, a power, commensurate with the greatness of those motives which are acting upon them in their new Christian state.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS



CHAPTER I. 1-2.

Salutation.

ST. PAUL begins this, in common with his other epistles, with a brief salutation to a particular church or group of churches, in which is expressed in summary the authority he has for writing to them, the light in which he regards them, and the central wish for them which he has in his heart.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus : Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here, then, we have three compressed thoughts.

1. The particular person Paul writes this letter because he is not only a believer in Christ but also an 'apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God.' The word apostle is a more or less general word for a delegate, as when St. Paul

speaks of the 'apostles (or messengers) of the churches¹;' but by an apostle in its highest sense, 'an apostle of Jesus Christ,' St. Paul meant one of those, originally twelve in number, who had received personally from the risen Christ a particular commission to represent Him to the world. This particular and personal commission he claimed to have received, in common with the twelve, though later than they—at the time of his conversion. 'Am I not an apostle?' he cries. 'Have I not seen Jesus our Lord²?' 'He appeared to me also as unto one born out of due time³.' 'In nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles⁴.' And as his claim to the apostolate was challenged by his Judaizing opponents he had to insist upon it, to insist that it is not a commission from or through Peter and the other apostles, or dependent upon them for its exercise, but a direct commission, like theirs, from the Head of the Church Himself. He is, he writes to the Galatians, 'Paul, an apostle, not from men, nor (like those subsequently ordained by himself or the other apostles, like a Timothy, or a Titus, or like the later clergy) through man,' but directly through,

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 23.² 1 Cor. ix. 1.³ 1 Cor. xv. 8.⁴ 2 Cor. xii. 11.

as well as from, the risen Jesus whom his eyes had seen, and His eternal Father ¹.

It is surely a consolation to us of the Church of England, who belong to a church subject to constant attack on the score of apostolic character, to remember that St. Paul's apostolate was attacked with some excuse, and that he had to spend a great deal of effort in vindicating it, and was in no way ashamed of doing so, because he perceived that a certain aspect of the life and truth of the Church was bound up with its recognition.

2. And he writes to the Asiatic Christians as 'saints' and 'faithful in Christ Jesus.' 'Saint' does not mean primarily what we understand by it—one pre-eminent in moral excellence; but rather one consecrated or dedicated to the service and use of God. The idea of consecration was common in all religions, and frequently, as in the Asiatic worships at Ephesus and elsewhere, carried with it associations quite the opposite of those which we assign to holiness. But the special characteristic of the Old Testament religion had been the righteous and holy character which it ascribed to Jehovah. Consecration to Him, therefore, is seen to require

¹ Gal. i. 1.

personal holiness, and this requirement is only deepened in meaning under the Gospel. But still 'the saints' means primarily the 'consecrated ones'; and all Christians are therefore saints—'called as saints' rather than 'called to be saints,' in virtue of their belonging to the consecrated body into which they were baptized; saints who because of their consecration are therefore bound to live holily¹. 'The saints' in the Acts of the Apostles² is simply a synonym for the Church. St. Paul then writes to the Asiatic Christians as 'consecrated' and 'faithful in Christ Jesus,' i. e. believing members incorporated by baptism; and he writes to them for no other purpose than to make them understand what is implied in their common consecration and common faith.

3. And his good wishes for them he sums up in the terms 'Grace and peace in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' Grace is that free and unmerited favour or good-will of God towards man which takes shape in a continuous outflow of the very riches of God's

¹ Tertullian, *de An.* 39, rightly interprets 1 Cor. vii. 14, 'now are they [the children of whose parents one was a Christian] holy,' as meaning, now are they already consecrated and marked out for baptismal sanctification by the prerogative of their birth.

² Acts ix. 13, 32.

inmost being and spirit into the life of man through Christ; and peace of heart, Godward and manward, 'central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation' is that by the possession and bestowal of which Christianity best gives assurance of its divine origin.

We notice that these divine gifts are ascribed to 'God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' St. Paul does not generally call Christ by the title God, partly, no doubt, from long engrained habit of language, but partly also because nothing was more important than that no language should be used in the first propagation of Christianity which could give excuse for confusing the Christian belief in the threefold Name with the worship of many gods. But, from the first, Christ, in St. Paul's language, is exalted as Lord into a simply divine supremacy, and associated most intimately with all the most exclusively divine operations in the world without, and in the heart of man within. Moreover, St. Paul refuses absolutely to tolerate any association of other, however exalted, beings with Christ in lordship or mediatorship, all created beings whatever being simply the work of His hands¹. There remains, therefore, no room to

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. viii. 6; Col. i. 16.

question that St. Paul believed Christ to be strictly divine: to be Himself no creature, no highest archangel, but one who, with the Holy Spirit alone, is truly proper and essential to the divine being; and it affords us, therefore, no manner of surprise that from time to time St. Paul actually calls Christ God, as in the Epistle to the Romans 'who is over all, God blessed for ever¹,' and probably in the Epistle to Titus 'our great God and saviour Jesus Christ².'

¹ Rom. ix. 5.

² Tit. ii. 13.

DIVISION I. CHAPTERS I. 3—IV. 17.

§ I. CHAPTER I. 3-14.

St. Paul's leading thoughts.

BEFORE we read the opening paragraph of St. Paul's letter we had better review the great thoughts which are prominent in his mind as he writes. My ambition is to make my readers feel that ideas which, because they have become Christian commonplaces or because they have been blackened by controversy, have by this time a ring of unreality about them, or of theological remoteness, or of controversial bitterness, are in fact, if we will 'consider them anew,' ideas the most important, the most practical, and the most closely adapted to the moral needs of the plain man.

i.

St. Paul writes to the Christians as 'in Christ,' 'in the beloved,' 'blessed with all spiritual benediction in the heavenly places in Christ,' 'adopted

as sons through Jesus Christ.' We are all of us perfectly familiar with the idea of Christ as, so to speak, a personal and individual redeemer, as the holy and righteous one, the beloved and accepted Son, who is risen from the dead and exalted to supreme sovereignty in heaven. But popular theology has not been quite so familiar with the idea that Christ was and is all this in our manhood, not simply because He was God as well as man (true as this is); but because as man He was anointed with the Holy Spirit of God: that it was in the power of that Spirit that He lived His life of holiness and wrought His miracles of power: that it was in the power of that Spirit that He taught and suffered and died and was glorified. Nor has popular Christianity been familiar with the resulting truth: that by that divine Spirit which possessed Him as man, the life of Christ is extended beyond Himself to take in those who believe in Him, and make them members of 'the church which is his body.' Yet, in fact, this extension is implied even in the name Christ. The king Messiah, the Christ of the Old Testament, is but the central figure of a whole kingdom associated with Him, and all the characteristic phrases for Christ in the New Testament ex-

press the same idea. He is the 'first-born among many brethren¹'; He is the 'first fruits²' of a great harvest; He is the 'head of the body³'; He is the 'bridegroom' inseparable from 'the bride⁴'; He is the second Adam, that is, head of a new humanity⁵. Thus if the heavens closed around the ascending Christ, and hid Him from view, they opened again around the descending Spirit, descending into the heart of the Christian society to perpetuate Christ's life and presence there. This historical ascent and descent only embody in unmistakable facts the truth that the life-giving Spirit, who made the manhood of Christ so satisfying to our moral aspirations, is also and with the same reality, though not with the same perfection or freedom, living and working in that great society which He founded to represent Him on earth. Because this society is possessed by the Spirit, therefore it lives in the same life as Christ, it and all its individual members are 'in Christ.' In one place, indeed, St. Paul includes the Church, the body, with its head under the one name 'the Christ⁶.'

It is because the Church thus shares Christ's

¹ Rom. viii. 29.

³ Eph. iv. 15, 16.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 45; Rom. v. 12-19.

² 1 Cor. xv. 23.

⁴ Eph. v. 32; Rev. xxi. 9.

⁶ 1 Cor. xii. 12.

life that it is already spoken of as sharing His exaltation. We 'sit together in the heavenly places with Christ' for no other reason than because, though we are on earth, our life is bound up invisibly but in living reality with the life of the glorified Christ, and we have in Him free access into the courts of heaven. For this reason again, as the fulness of the divine attributes dwells in the glorified Christ—all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, so the same fulness is attributed, ideally at least, to the Church too. It too is 'the fulness of him that filleth all in all.' To St. Paul's mind there is one true human life in which men are one with one another because they are at one with God. That true human life is Christ's life, which He once lived on earth, and which He is at present living in the glory of God, and which is fulfilled with all the completeness of the divine life itself. But that true human life is also shared by each and every member of His Church, without exception, without reference to race or learning, or wealth, or sex, or age.

I have said that this is ideally the case. This identification of Christ with the Church, that is to say, is not yet fully realized. The Church is not yet glorified, not yet morally perfected nor

full grown in the divine attributes. Its particular members may be living deceitful and dishonourable lives. This is to say in other words that God's work in 'redemption of his own possession,' His acquirement of a people to Himself, is not yet complete. The purchase-money is paid, but it has not yet taken full effect. But redemption is an accomplished fact in the sense that all the conditions of the final success are already there. The ideal may be freely realized in every Christian because he has received the 'earnest' or pledge of the Spirit, the pledge, that is, of all that is to be accomplished in him. And this Spirit was received by each Christian at a particular and assignable moment. We know what stress St. Paul laid at Ephesus on proper Christian baptism and the laying on of hands which followed it¹. By baptism men were spoken of as incorporated into Christ. With the laying on of hands was associated the bestowal of the Spirit. Henceforth a Christian had no need to ask for the Spirit as if He were not already bestowed upon him; he had only to bring into practical use spiritual forces and powers which the divine bounty had already put at his disposal.

¹ Acts xix. 1-7.

If we compare this set of ideas with those that have been current in our popular theology, we shall find that the main difference lies in this, that here the stress is laid on the work of Christ *in* man by His Spirit, while the theology which has been popular among us has laid the stress rather on the 'vicarious' work of Christ outside us and *for* us, by making a propitiation for our sins. Now in fact this latter doctrine is an unmistakable part of St. Paul's teaching in this epistle and elsewhere. And all the mistakes to which it has led are due to its not having been kept in proper relation to the set of ideas which I have just been endeavouring to expound. 'Christ for us,' the sacrifice of propitiation has been separated from 'Christ in us,' our new life; whereas really the sacrifice was but a necessary removal of an obstacle, preliminary to the new life.

It was a necessary preliminary that Christ should put us on a fresh basis, should enable us to break from our past and make a fresh start in the divine acceptance. This He did by making atonement for our sins, offering as a propitiatory sacrifice His life, even to the shedding of His blood, that the Father might be enabled to forgive our sins. This transaction is always

represented in the New Testament as being the act of the Father as well as of the Son, for the divine persons are not separable—neither an act by which the Son forces the unwilling hand of the Father, nor an act in which the Father lays an undeserved burden upon an unwilling Son—and the idea of propitiation seems to St. Paul, as indeed it has seemed to men generally, a thoroughly natural idea. Only in one place does he make any suggestion as to why such a preliminary sacrifice of propitiation was necessary. There¹ he seems to find the moral necessity for it in the fact that through long ages God's 'forbearance' had left men to work through their own resources and so to find out their need of Him. 'He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.' He 'winked at' or 'overlooked times of ignorance.' He 'passed over sins'.² This was part of His educative process. One result of it, however, was a lowering of the moral ideas entertained of the divine character. Thus God's righteousness, which means holiness and compassion combined, needed to be declared especially at that crisis of the divine dealings when God was coming out towards

¹ Rom. iii. 24-26. I have tried to develop St. Paul's hint.

² Rom. iii. 25; Acts xiv. 16; Acts xvii. 30.

men, whom He had educated by His seeming absence to feel their need of Him, with the offer of His love. The free bounty of His mercy must not be misunderstood as if it were indifference or laxity about moral wickedness. Thus the proclamation of His compassion must be associated with something which would make unmistakable the severity of His holiness and His moral claim. This twofold end is what Christ accomplishes. Thus if He is the revealer of the compassion of the Father, He also vindicates the divine character by a great act of moral reparation, made in man's name and on man's behalf, to the divine holiness which our sins have ignored and outraged. This great act of reparation is consummated in the bloodshedding of the Christ. The sacrifice of consummate obedience is carried to its extreme point and accepted in its perfection. God in Christ receives from man, and that publicly, a perfect reparation: an acknowledgement without fault or drawback: a perfect sacrifice. Now God can forgive the sins of men freely and without moral risk, if they come to Him in the name of Christ. To come to God in the name of Christ means, of course, to come in conscious moral identification of one's self with Christ, with

His Spirit and His motives. The faith which simply accepts the bounty of forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice, must pass necessarily into the faith which corresponds obediently with the divine love. Thus the purpose of the atonement is never expressed as being that we should be let off punishment, or simply that we should be forgiven, but rather that, being forgiven, we should be united to Christ in His life¹. The propitiation which Christ offered is only the removal of a preliminary obstacle to our fellowship with Him in the life of God. The work of Christ 'for us' has no meaning or efficacy till it has begun to pass into the work of Christ 'in us' by His assimilating Spirit. It was only as baptized into Christ and sharing His Spirit that Christians could accept the forgiveness of their sins through the shedding of Christ's blood. The sacrament of new life is also the sacrament of absolution, and the washing away of sins. Nothing in fact can be plainer in this Epistle to the Ephesians than that 'the redemption through Christ's blood, even the forgiveness of trespasses'² was only a preliminary removal of

¹ The earliest and simplest expression of the matter is that in St. Paul's earliest epistle (1 Thess. v. 10), Christ 'died for us . . . that we should live together with him.'

² Eph. i. 7; cf. ii. 13 ff.

obstacles to that fellowship with God in Christ by His Spirit which is the secret of the Church.

ii.

St. Paul's mind is full of the idea of predestination. He delights to contemplate the eternal purpose of God as lying behind what seems to us the painfully slow method by which divine results are actually won. What age-long processes have been necessary both among the Jews and among the Gentiles before this young church, this divine society of man with God has become possible! What slow working through 'times of ignorance,' what infinite delay in the divine forbearance—as we should now say, what age-long processes of developement! But St. Paul is quite certain that the result is no afterthought, no accident of the moment; but that from end to end of the universe there reaches a method of the divine wisdom, and that here in the catholic church it has arrived at an issue. 'God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blemish (as spotless victims) before him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself.' 'Fore-

ordained to be a heritage according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will.' So he asseverates and repeats and insists. There are, we may say, two ideas commonly associated with predestination which St. Paul gives us no warrant for asserting. The one is the predestination of individuals to eternal loss or destruction. That God should create any single individual with the intention of eternally destroying or punishing him is a horrible idea, and, without prying into mysteries, we may say boldly that there is no warrant for it in the Old or New Testaments. God is indeed represented as predestinating men, like Jacob and Esau, to a higher or lower place in the order of the world or the church. There are 'vessels' made by the divine potter to purposes of 'honour,' and 'vessels' made to purposes (comparatively) of 'dishonour'¹: there are more honourable and less honourable limbs of the body². But this does not prejudice the eternal prospects of those who in this world hold the less advantageous posts. With God is no respect of persons. Again God is represented as predestinating men to moral hardness of heart where such hardness is a judgement on previous wilfulness. Thus

¹ Rom. ix. 21.

² 1 Cor. xii. 22 ff.

men may be predestined to temporary rejection of God, as in St. Paul's mind the majority of the contemporary Jews were. That was their judgement, and their punishment¹. It was however not God's first intention for them nor His last. Those chapters of St. Paul² which contain the most terrible things about the present reprobation of the Jews contain also the most emphatic repudiation of the idea that moral reprobation was God's first idea for them, or His last. 'The gifts and calling of God,' that is, His good gifts and calling, says St. Paul, speaking of the now 'reprobate' Jews, are 'without repentance³.' God's present reprobation of them is only a process towards a fresh opportunity. 'God hath shut up all into disobedience that he might have mercy upon all⁴.' Men may baffle the original divine purpose, and that, so far as their own blessedness is concerned, even finally: they may become finally 'reprobate': but the divine purpose for them at its root remains a purpose for good. 'God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth⁵.'

¹ Cf. St. Matt. xiii. 13-15; St. John xii. 39, 40. We are not (Rom. ix. 17) told *why* Pharaoh was brought out on the stage of history as an example of God's hardening judgement. But no doubt there was a moral reason.

² Rom. ix-xi.

³ Rom. xi. 29.

⁴ Rom. xi. 32.

⁵ 1 Tim. ii. 4.

And once again, the idea of a predestination for good, taking effect necessarily and irrespective of men's co-operation, is an idea which has been intruded unjustifiably into St. Paul's thought. It exalts his whole being to consider that he is co-operating with God, and that the conditions under which he lives represent a divine purpose with which he is called to work. It is this which makes him feel it is worth while working: it is this which nerves and sustains him in all sufferings, and enlarges his horizon in all restraints: but he never suggests that it does not lie within the mysterious power of his own will to withdraw himself from co-operation with God. It is at least conceivable to him that he should himself be rejected¹. In that famous list of external forces which he feels are unable to tear him from the grasp of the divine love, his own will is not included², nor could be included without gross inconsistency.

Beyond all question there is here one problem which remains for all time unsolved and insoluble—the relation of divine fore-knowledge³

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 27.

² Rom. viii. 38, 39

³ I am using the word here not in its Bible sense, for in the Bible God is said to 'know' men in the sense of fixing His choice or approval upon them; and to 'foreknow' is therefore to approve or choose beforehand, as suitable instruments for a divine purpose. I am using the word in its ordinary sense.

to human freedom. If we men are free to choose, how can it be, or can it really be the case at all, that God knows beforehand actually how each individual will behave in each particular case? This is a problem which we cannot fathom any more than we can fathom any of the problems which require for their solution an experience of what an absolute and eternal consciousness can mean. But the problem belongs to metaphysics. It inheres in the idea of eternity and God. The Bible neither creates it nor solves it. We may say it does not touch it.

Certainly when St. Paul dwells upon the thought of divine predestination he dwells upon it in order to emphasize that, through all the vicissitudes of the world's history, a divine purpose runs; and especially that God works out His universal purposes through specially selected agents 'his elect,' on whom His choice rests for special ends in accordance with an eternal design and intention. And the sense of co-operating with an eternal purpose of God inspires and strengthens him. For God will not drop His work by the way. Whom He did foreknow or mark out beforehand for His divine purposes, them He also foreordained or predestinated to sonship, and in due time called into the number

of His elect, and justified them, that is, pardoned their sins and gave them a new standing-ground in Christ, and glorified or will glorify them by the gradual operation of His grace¹. The steps or moments of the divine action recognized in the Epistle to the Romans are practically the same as those alluded to in the Epistle to the Ephesians. There also is the eternal choice, and the predestination to sonship, and at a particular time the call into the Church, and the justification or remission of sins through the blood of Christ, and the gradual promotion through sanctification to glory. And the moral fruit of contemplating God's eternal purpose for His elect, and the stages of His work upon them, is to be cheerful confidence of a right sort. God will not drop them by the way, nor the work which they are 'called' to accomplish. 'God who hath begun a good work will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ².' Wherever St. Paul recognizes a movement towards good in the single soul or in the world, he knows that it is no accidental or passing phase: it has its roots in the eternal will, and unless we resist it in wilful obstinacy, the eternal will shall at last

¹ Rom. viii. 28-30.

² Phil. i. 6.

carry it on to perfection. 'There shall never be one lost good.'

It is not out of place to notice in this connexion how closely akin is St. Paul's thought to the modern philosophy of evolution. Only to St. Paul the slow process of cosmic or human evolution is in no kind of opposition to the idea of divine design.

iii.

This predestinated body, the Church, is what in another word St. Paul calls the 'elect' or 'chosen.' The idea of election has had a very false turn given to it, partly through mistakes which have been already alluded to, partly because the idea of election has been separated from another idea with which in the Bible it is most closely associated, the idea of a universal purpose to which the elect minister. No thought can be more prominent in the Old Testament than the thought that some men out of multitudes have been chosen by God to be in a special relation of intimacy with Him. 'You only have I known, O Israel, of all the families of the earth.' But this election to special knowledge of God, and special spiritual opportunity,

carries with it a corresponding responsibility. It is no piece of favouritism on God's part. The greater our opportunity the more is required of us. 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth ; therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities¹.' The fact is that the principle of inequality in capacity and opportunity runs through the whole world both in individuals and in societies. A great genius or a great nation has special privileges and opportunities, but also, in the sight of God who judges men according to their opportunities, special responsibilities. But also (and this is by far the most important point) the special vocation of every elect individual or body is for the sake of others². It is God's method to work through the few upon the many. That is the law of ministry which binds all the world of strong and weak, of rich and poor, of learned and ignorant, into one. Thus Abraham had been chosen alone, but it was that, through his seed, all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Israel was exclusively the people of God, but it was in order that all nations should learn from them at last the word of God. The apostles were

¹ Amos iii. 2.

² On the Jewish idea of election, cf. app. note C, p. 261.

the first 'elect' in Christ with a little Jewish company. 'We'—so St. Paul speaks of the Jewish Christians—'we who had before hoped in Christ.' But it was to show the way to all the Gentiles ('ye also, who have heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,') who were also to constitute 'God's own possession' and His 'heritage.' The purpose to be realized is a universal one: it is the re-union of man with man, as such, by being all together reunited to God in one body. And this idea is to have application even beyond the bounds of humanity. Unity is the principle of all things as God created the world. 'In Christ,' St. Paul writes to the Colossians, 'all things consist' or 'hold together in one system'¹. It is only sin, whether in man or in the dimly-known spiritual world which lies beyond, which has spoiled this unity, and in separating the creatures from God has separated them from one another. And the Church of the reconciliation is God's elect body to represent a divine purpose of restoration far wider than itself—extending in fact to all creation. It is the divine purpose, with a view to 'a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up' or 'bring together again in unity' all things in

¹ Col. i. 1.

Christ ; the things in the heaven, the dim spiritual forces of which we have only glimpses, and the things upon the earth which we know so much better.

This great and rich idea of the election of the Church as a special body to fulfil a universal purpose of recovery, cannot be expressed better than in the very ancient prayer which forms part of the paschal ceremonies of the Latin liturgy. 'O God of unchangeable power and eternal light, look favourably on Thy whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery, and by the tranquil operation of Thy perpetual providence, carry out the work of man's salvation ; and let the whole world feel and see that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and all things are returning to perfection through Him, from whom they took their origin, even through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

iv.

This universal reconciliation through a catholic church was God's eternal purpose, but it was kept secret from the ages and the generations, only at last to be disclosed to His

apostles and prophets. The word 'mystery' in the New Testament means mostly a divine secret which has now been disclosed. Just as the secret of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, i. e. the purpose of God in the then order of the world, was imparted to Daniel, so now the great disclosure of the divine mystery or secret has been made, primarily indeed to apostles and prophets, but through them to the whole body of the faithful. The faithful must of course begin by receiving that simplest spiritual nourishment which is milk for babes. They are to welcome the divine forgiveness of their sins in Christ, and the gift of new life through Him in their baptism and the laying-on of hands. They are to be taught the rudimentary truths and moral lessons which are the first principles of the oracles of Christ. But they are not to stop with this. They are, and they are all of them without exception¹, intended to grow up to the full apprehension of the wisdom of the 'perfect' or perfectly initiated. They are to dwell upon the divine secret, now revealed, of God's purpose for the universe through the church till their whole heart and intellect and imagination is enlightened and enriched by it.

¹ Col. i. 28.

v.

And is the greatness of this exaltation and knowledge vouchsafed to the Church to be a renewed occasion of pride — that spiritual pride, the fatal results of which had already become apparent through the rejection of the Jews? No: unless through a complete mistake, the very opposite must be the result. The strength of human pride, as St. Paul had seen long ago, lay in the idea that man could have merit of his own, face to face with God: could have good works which were his own and not God's, and which gave him a claim upon God. That Jewish doctrine of merit¹ had been convicted of utter falsity in St. Paul's own spiritual experience. He had found himself brought to acknowledge, like any sinner of the Gentiles, his simple dependence upon the divine compassion for forgiveness and acceptance. This spiritual experience of St. Paul was only the realizing through one channel of what is, in fact, an elementary truth about human nature. The idea of human independence is demonstrably a false idea. As a matter of fact, man draws his life, physical and spiritual, from

¹ See app. note C, p. 257.

sources beyond himself—from the one source, God. In constant dependence on God he lives necessarily from moment to moment, whether to breathe, or think, or will. The freedom of will which he has is not really originaive or creative power, but a capacity of voluntary correspondence with what is given him from beyond himself. In that power of correspondence, or refusal to correspond, man's liberty begins and ends. He creates nothing. It is not that man does something and then God does the rest. The truth is that when we track man's good action to its root in his will, we find for certain that God has been beforehand with him. The good he does is in correspondence with moral and physical laws and forces of the universe, or, in other words, with divine powers and purposes lent and suggested to him. To attempt independence of God, to have schemes and plans absolutely one's own, is to work arbitrarily and ignorantly, and ultimately to fail and to know that one has failed. Thus men, when they realize the facts of their condition, must depend, and rejoice to depend, wholly upon God as for forgiveness where they have done wrong, so also for suggestion and power that they may do anything aright. There is

then no room for human pride. It is a mistake. We come back to recognize, what St. Paul realized in his own deep spiritual experience and taught the Church at the beginning. Whatever is good in the world is all of divine initiation and of divine grace. It is all, not to our glory, but (as St. Paul three times repeats in the opening paragraphs of our epistle) 'to the praise of his glory,' or 'to the praise of the glory of his grace which he freely bestows on us' out of His pure love and goodwill.

These are the great leading thoughts which are in St. Paul's mind as he begins to write to the Asiatic Christians. His heart, his imagination, his intellect is full of the thought of the catholic society as it exists in Christ, the extension of His life; of this society as the outcome of an eternal and slow-working purpose of God; of this society, as serving universal divine ends for humanity and for the universe; of this society, as affording a sphere in which all men's faculties may be enlightened and delighted with the depth and largeness of the divine purpose; while his whole being is kept, safe from all the delusions of pride, in continual and conscious dependence upon divine grace.

With these thoughts reflected in our minds we shall find that we have the main clue to the whole of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and more particularly to all the words of the opening chapter, which St. Paul begins with a great ascription of praise to God for the blessing of the Church.

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved: in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him, *I say*, in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ: in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of *God's* own possession, unto the praise of his glory.

DIVISION I. § 2. CHAPTER I. 15-23.

St. Paul's Prayer.

ST. PAUL follows up this first expression of the great thoughts that fill his mind with a deep and comprehensive thanksgiving for that large measure of correspondence with the divine purpose which is reported from the Asiatic churches, and with a prayer for their full enlightenment in heart and intellect. He prays that they may rise to the true science of what their Christian calling, as fellow-inheritors with the saints of the divine blessing, really means; and to an adequate expectation of what God intends to do in them, on the analogy of what He has already done in Christ their head.

For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and which *ye shew* toward all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention *of you* in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches

of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

There is very little further explanation needed for this passage. But three phrases may be noted:—

(1) St. Paul calls the Father 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,' as our Lord Himself calls Him 'my God' (John xx. 17) in His resurrection state. It is no doubt of Christ *as man* that the Father is God; but this relation of the Son as *man* to the Father depends upon an eternal subordination in which the Son, even as God, stands to the Father from whom He derives His divine life. The essential subordination of the Son (and Spirit) to the Father as the one fount of Godhead, is continually suggested in the New Testament; but it involves no inferiority in Godhead, or subsequence in time—'nothing before or after, nothing greater or less,' as the *Quicumque vult* says. And it conveys to us the

moral lesson that a subordinate position is not to be resented as if it were a dishonour.

(2) The spirit of 'wisdom and revelation' vouchsafed to us is to enable us to apprehend in a measure the divine 'wisdom and prudence'¹ manifested in God's work of creation and redemption. The humility which is content to correspond patiently and teachably with the method of God is, as Francis Bacon was at pains to teach, of the essence of all fruitful human science.

(3) The expression 'the fulness' or 'the fulness of the Godhead'² means the sum total of the divine attributes, which, instead of being spread over different angelic mediators, as the Colossians were disposed to imagine, are, by the divine will, all concentrated and combined in the glorified Christ. And here St. Paul teaches the Ephesian Christians that all that belongs to the glorified Christ is to belong also to the Church, which is His body. It is Christ who gives to all creatures whatever various gifts of life they have. He 'filleth all in all'; that is, 'He filleth the whole universe with all variety of

¹ i. 8.

² See Col. i. 19; ii. 9; cf. ii. 3, 'in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden.'

gifts.' But something much more than various gifts—the sum total of all He is—He pours, or intends to pour, into the Church, so that the Church as well as the Christ shall embody, and thus be identified with, the fulness of the divine attributes. At present the Church is this only ideally, or in the divine intention: the actually existing Church has still much need of growth that her members 'may be filled (as they are not at present) up to the measure of the divine fulness'; or, in other words, up to 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ¹.'

The fulness, according to St. Paul's doctrine, is to be sought first in the eternal God; then in the glorified Christ; then, through Him, in the fully developed Church; and, finally, through the Church, in a sense in the universe as a whole, when the work of redemption is done and God is at last 'all in all' throughout His creation.

It may be noticed that St. Paul, in this doctrine of 'the fulness,' is thinking rather of the divine attributes as manifested, than as they are in themselves: and of Christ, not as the eternal

¹ Eph. iii. 19; iv. 13. It is not certain that by Him 'who filleth all in all' St. Paul does not mean the Father rather than the Son. But iv. 10 supports the interpretation given above.

Son of God, but, more particularly, as incarnate and glorified. It was the 'good pleasure' of the Father to fill the exalted Christ, the first-begotten from the dead, with the fulness of divine glory and power as the reward of the humility and love which He showed when He 'emptied himself in taking the form of a servant'¹. This bestowal was no doubt a giving anew to Him, as man and as head of the Church, what was eternally His as Son of the Father.

There is another interpretation adopted by Chrysostom in ancient times, and by Dr. Hort among moderns, of the phrase 'the church which is his body, the fulness of him who filleth all in all.' According to them the Church is regarded as making the Christ complete. It is in this sense the 'fulfilment' of Christ, because without the Church He would be a head without its members: and then the rest of the sentence should be translated differently—'the church which is his body, the fulfilment of him who is fulfilled in all ways with all things.' But this is decidedly less agreeable to the general use of the expression 'the fulness' in the epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians².

¹ Col. i. 19; Phil. ii. 9-11.

² And the word rendered 'filleth' may have a middle and not

We may also pause to recognize one or two ways in which St. Paul's view of the Christian religion, as exhibited in the opening of this epistle, suggests special deficiencies among ourselves.

(1) St. Paul's Christianity is a religion of thankfulness. This epistle is a burst of exuberant praise. Yet he was himself a prisoner, and the church of Ephesus, with the other Asiatic churches, was sorely threatened with moral and spiritual perils of all kinds. The secret of this thankfulness is that he looks straight away from himself and his surroundings up to God. He measures the value of human life and work not by what immediate experience suggests, but by what he knows of the purpose of God. In spite of all the obstacles opposed by human wilfulness and weakness and sin, he knows that His purpose will effect itself: therefore he 'rejoices in the Lord always,' and no discouraging circumstances can quench the springs of his rejoicing. Our Christianity is apt to be of a very 'dutiful' kind. We mean to do our duty, we attend church and go to our communions. But our hearts are full of the difficulties, the hardships,

a passive sense, the idea being perhaps suggested that God 'fills all things for his own purpose.'

the obstacles which the situation presents, and we go on our way sadly, downhearted and despondent. We need to learn or learn anew from St. Paul that true Christianity is inseparable from deep joy; and the secret of that joy lies in a continual looking away from all else—away from sin and its ways, and from the manifold hindrances to the good we would do—up to God, His love, His purpose, His will. In proportion as we do look up to Him we shall rejoice, and in proportion as we rejoice in the Lord will our religion have tone and power and attractiveness.

(2) St. Paul appeals to the Asiatic Christians not to become something they are not, or to acquire some spiritual gift that they have not received, but simply to realize what they already are, and to claim the privileges of their baptized state. They are already 'adopted as sons¹.' They have, like the Galatians, received 'the Spirit of adoption.' The point now is that they should realize and put into practice what already belongs to them. This mode of appeal is based on the doctrine—in spite of its many perversions the most valuable doctrine—of baptismal regene-

¹ That is, they were 'predestined to an adoption' (Eph. i. 5) which it is implied they have already received.

ration. The false method of appeal—as if careless Christians needed to *become* sons of God—which involves a false idea of ‘regeneration,’ has been so much identified with popular Protestantism, that I cannot do better than quote some very apposite remarks by the late Congregationalist teacher, Dr. Dale, of blessed memory, from his noble commentary on this very epistle to the Ephesians :—

‘This adoption of which Paul speaks is something more than a mere legal and formal act, conveying certain high prerogatives. We are “called the sons of God” because we are really made His sons by a new and supernatural birth. Regeneration is sometimes described as though it were merely a change in a man’s principles of conduct in his character, his tastes, his habits. The description is theologically false, and practically most pernicious and misleading. If regeneration were nothing more than this, we should have to speak of a man as being more or less regenerate, according to the extent of his moral reformation ; but this would be contrary to the idiom of New Testament thought. That a great change in the moral region of a man’s nature will certainly follow regeneration is true ; this change, however, is not regeneration itself, but the effect of regeneration ; and the moral change which regeneration produces varies in many ways in different men. In some the change is immediate, decisive, and apparently complete. In others it is extremely gradual, and may be for a long time hardly discernible. In some regenerate men grave sins remain for a time unforsaken, perhaps unrecognized. Look at these Ephesian Christians.

The Apostle has to tell them that they must put away falsehood and speak the truth, that they must give up thieving, and foul talk, and covetousness, and gross sensual sin.

He addresses them as "saints." He describes them as having been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and foreordained by God unto adoption as sons unto Himself; and yet he knows that they are in danger of committing these base and flagrant offences. It was hard for them to escape from the vices of heathen sin. They were regenerate; but as yet, in some of them, the moral effects of regeneration were very incomplete, the change which regeneration was ultimately certain to produce in their moral life had only begun, and it was checked and hindered by a thousand hostile influences.

The simplest and most obvious account of regeneration is the truest. When a man is regenerated he receives a new life and receives it from God. In itself regeneration is not a change in his old life, but the beginning of a new life which is conferred by the immediate and supernatural act of the Holy Spirit. The man is really "born again." A higher nature comes to him than that which he inherited from his human parents; he is "begotten of God," "born of the Spirit."

This passage, especially as coming from Dr. Dale, supplies a very valuable corrective to still current religious mistakes. But surely we have no ground for saying that the moral effects 'certainly' follow regeneration, or follow it in all cases. It is not 'ultimately certain to produce' them in all persons, but only in those who

exhibit, sooner or later, the moral correspondence of a converted will.

(3) Most Christians who have reacted from Calvinism and its false doctrine of predestination have ceased to think about the truth which it represents. But we need to make a right instead of a wrong use of these great ideas of predestination and election, and thus to get rid of all the miserable narrowness and hopelessness which settles down upon us when we allow ourselves to think of religion as mainly a process of saving our own souls, and when we live only in our present feelings.

What can be more inspiring and strengthening than to believe that there is an eternal purpose of God working itself out in the universe through all its stages and parts ; that this eternal purpose includes us, and has fastened upon us individually and brought us into Christ and His Church, to make true men of us ; and that it has done all this not for our own sakes only, but to disclose something more of God's glory and for the fulfilment of great and universal purposes, which are to radiate out even from us ? Wherever St. Paul sees the hand of God in present experience, at once his mind works back to an eternal will and therefore also for-

ward to an eternal and adequate result. And this backward and forward look transfigures the present with a new glory and a fresh hope. So will it be with us if this same characteristically Christian way of looking at any apparent movement of God in the present, in our own souls or in the world outside us, becomes habitually and instinctively ours. God never acts on a sudden impulse or without purpose of continuance. Certainly He can be trusted not to stop and leave things unfinished. When He hath begun any good work He will assuredly perfect it, if we will let Him.

DIVISION I. § 3. CHAPTER II. I-10.

Sin and redemption.

IN the first chapter of the epistle, St. Paul has had before his eyes the glory of God's redemptive work—the wonder of His purpose of pure love for the universe through the Church. His imagination has kindled at the thought of the length, the breadth, the height of the divine operation:—the length, for it is an eternal purpose slowly worked out through the ages; the breadth, for it is to extend over the whole universe; the height, for it is to carry men up to no lower point than the throne of Christ in the heavenly places. But now he stops to call the attention of his converts to what we may call a 'fourth dimension' of the divine operation—its depth. How wonderfully low God had stooped, in order to reach the point to which man had sunk! The Asiatic Christians are bidden to ponder anew, and by

contrast to their present experience, the life which they had once lived before they knew Christ or were found in Him.

Let us read the apostle's words, and then consider them in detail:—

And you *did he quicken*, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein aforetime ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

We naturally put as a parallel to these and other verses of this epistle (iv. 17-19) the terrible passage in Romans i, where St. Paul describes the developement of sin in the Gentile world; how it had its origin in the refusal of the human will to recognize God, how out of the perversion of will it spread to the blinding of the understanding, and then to giving an overmastering power and an unnatural distortion to the passions, so that a state of moral lawlessness was produced and maintained.

What are we to say as to the truth of these accounts of the moral condition of the heathen world? No doubt there is a good deal to be

said on the other side. Roman simplicity and virtue, and the sanctity of domestic life, had not, as contemporary inscriptions and historical records make perfectly evident, faded out of the Roman Empire, and philanthropy and love of the poor were recognized excellences. Nor had philosophic virtue vanished from the schools¹. And all this St. Paul would not be slow to recognize. In the Epistle to the Romans² itself he speaks in language, such as a Stoic might have used, of those who, uninstructed by any special divine law, were a law unto themselves, in that they showed the practical effect of the law written in their hearts. We must therefore recognize that St. Paul is, in the passage we are now considering, speaking ideally; that is to say, he is speaking of the general tendency of the heathen life, just as he speaks ideally of the Christian church in view of its general tendency; and he is speaking of it as he mostly knew it himself in the notoriously corrupt cities of the east, Antioch and Ephesus. Ephesus, in particular, had an extraordinarily bad character for vice as much as for superstition; and what

¹ On the virtuous aspect of the contemporary empire, see Renan, *Les Apôtres*, pp. 306 ff.

² Rom. ii. 14.

St. Paul says of the heathen life does not in fact make up a stronger indictment or present a blacker picture than what is said by a Stoic philosopher, perhaps his contemporary, who wrote at Ephesus, under the shelter of the name of the great Ephesian of ancient days, Heraclitus¹. Moreover, St. Paul appeals unhesitatingly to the actual experience of these Asiatic Christians, and there is no reason to doubt that their consciences would have responded to what he said to them about the old life out of which they had been brought.

Let us now analyze a little more exactly this account St. Paul gives of the state of sin which he saw around him in contemporary society.

(1) 'Ye walked according to the course of this world.' By 'this world' St. Paul, like the other New Testament writers, means practically human society as it organizes itself for its own purposes of pleasure or profit without thought of God, or at least without thought of God as He truly is. These Asiatic Christians, then, had formerly ordered their life and conduct according to the demands and expectations of the worldly world, obeying its motives, governed

¹ See app. note B, p. 255.

by its fashions and its laws, and indifferent to those considerations which it repudiated or ignored.

(2) But to belong to the world in this sense is, in St. Paul's mind, to belong to the kingdom of Satan. The worldly world had its origin from a false desire of independence on man's part. He did not want to be controlled by God; he wanted to live his own life for himself. But in liberating himself according to his wishes from the control of God he fell, according to St. Paul's belief, under another control. Rebellion had been in the universe before man. There are invisible rebel spirits, of whose real existence and influence St. Paul had no more doubt than any other Jew who was not a Sadducee. And, indeed, our Lord had so spoken of good and evil spirits as to assure His disciples of their existence and influence. These rebel wills are unseen by us and in most respects unknown, but they organize and give a certain coherence and continuity to evil in the world. There thus arises a sort of kingdom of evil over against the kingdom of God, and those who will not surrender themselves to God and His kingdom, become perforce servants of Satan and his kingdom. It is in view of this truth that St. Paul

tells these Asiatic Christians that they used to walk according 'to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience.' (These evil spirits were, by a natural way of thinking, located in the air, according to the contemporary Jewish ideas; and the idea is, if nothing more, a convenient metaphor for a subtle and pervading influence.) This view of their old life, as a bondage to evil spirits, is one which would be as easily realized by inhabitants of Asiatic cities, where men were largely occupied in finding charms against bad spirits, as by modern Indian converts from devil-worship. Christianity recognizes a basis of reality in the superstition from which at the same time it delivers men.

(3) The main characteristic of this old godless life had been lawlessness, but St. Paul here, as in his Epistle to the Romans, associates Jews with Gentiles, 'we' with 'you,' in the same condemnation. The spirits, or real selves of the Christians, had been, in their former state, dominated by their appetites or their imaginations. They were occupied in doing what their flesh or their thoughts suggested. It is noticeable that St. Paul puts 'the mind' side by side with 'the flesh' as a cause of sin, the intel-

lectual side by side with the sensual and emotional nature. We often in fact, in our age, have experience of people who are not 'sensual' in the ordinary sense, but who live lives which have no goodness, no perseverance, no order, no fruitfulness in them, because they are the slaves of the ideas of their own mind as they present themselves, now one, now another; unregulated ideas being in fact, just as much as unregulated passions, fluctuating, arbitrary, and tyrannous. Nothing is more truly needed to-day than the discipline of the imagination.

(4) Men living such a life of bondage are described further as 'dead through their trespasses and sins.' St. Paul means by death to describe any state of intellectual and moral insensibility. He would have the Christian 'dead' to the motives and voices of the worldly and sensual world. So in the same way he reminds the Asiatic Christians that to all that life of God in which they were now fruitfully living, they had at one time been insensible or dead—that is, blind to those things which now seemed most apparent, unterrified at what would now seem most horrible, unmoved by what now seemed most fascinating. And if this was their state viewed in itself, in their relation to God

they were, like the Jews also, 'children of wrath.' This expression is used in our catechism to describe 'original sin,' that is to say, that moral disorder or weakness which belongs to our nature as we inherit it, before we have had the opportunity of personal wrong doing. But the application of the phrase by St. Paul is to describe rather the state of *actual* sin in which Jew and Gentile alike 'naturally' lived. It implies not that God hated them, for in the whole context St. Paul is emphasizing 'the great love wherewith he loved them'; but that there was a necessary moral incompatibility between them as they then were, and God as He essentially and permanently is. God is so necessarily holy that His being is, and must be, intolerable to the unholy. It must be the case that at the bare idea of the divine coming, 'sinners in Zion' should be 'afraid,' and should say one to another, 'who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings¹?' God necessarily presents Himself as a terror to the godless; and from the point of view of God that means that our sinful nature is the subject of His necessary wrath. He resents the perver-

¹ Is. xxxiii. 14, 15.

sion, the spoiling, of His own handiwork in us. He cannot tolerate uncleanness, rebellion, unbelief. This wrath of God, in the case of those whose wills are set to 'hate the light,' is directed against men's persons. But so far as sin is only in our natures, and is something of which we are the unwilling subjects, it appeals only to God's compassion to lead Him to apply effective remedies. His wrath is so far against sin, not against sinners; and none could know better than these Asiatic Christians what lengths of resourcefulness and self-sacrifice the divine compassion had gone in order to redeem men from its tyranny. Thus St. Paul continues:—

But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love where-with he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly *places*, in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus: for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.

Here is St. Paul's description of the method of God in dealing with men when they were in

that state of sin, the conditions of which he has just summarised. We take note of the chief points in the method.

(1) St. Paul has in mind here, as always, the divine predestination. There was an eternal purpose in the divine mind to make St. Paul and those to whom he wrote such as they were now on the way to become; it was a purpose not merely general, but extending to details. It belongs, in fact, to the divine perfection, that God does nothing, and purposes nothing, in mere vague generality. The universal range and scope of the divine activity as over all creatures whatsoever, hinders not at all its perfect application to detail. Thus God had 'predestined,' or held in His eternal purpose, not merely the state of Christians as a whole or even of the Asiatic Christians in particular, but the details of conduct which He willed them individually to exhibit. It is the particular 'good works' which God 'prepared beforehand in order that they should walk in them'¹.

(2) What God predestined He accomplished first in summary 'in Christ Jesus.' In Him all that God meant to do for man was exhibited

¹ Cf. app. note C, p. 263, for a similar thought in a contemporary Jewish book.

and accomplished as God's own and perfect handiwork, as an effective and final disclosure. Men are to look for everything, for every kind of development and progress, in Christ, but for nothing outside or beyond Him. All is there—'all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,' all 'the fulness of the Godhead,' all the perfections of mankind, the reconciliation of all seeming opposites. All is brought to the highest possible level of attainment, 'the heavenly place.'

(3) What had been summarily realized in Christ is progressively realized in those who are 'in Him.' Undeterred by their condition of moral and spiritual death, God, out of the heart of His rich mercy, simply because of the great love He bore to men, has brought them, by one act of regeneration, into the new life of His Son ; has 'quickened them together with Christ,' that is, has introduced them, at a definite moment of initiation, into the life which has once for all triumphed over death, and been glorified in the heavenly places ; and has introduced them into this life in order that, by the gradual assimilation of its forces, future ages might witness in them all the wealth of the goodness which had lain hid in the original act

of incorporation. Meanwhile, while their growth is yet imperfect, God sees those who are Christ's as 'in Christ': imputes His merits to them, so we may legitimately say: that is, sees them and deals with them in view of the fact that Christ's Spirit is at work in them; sees them and deals with them 'not as they are, but as they are becoming.' *This* doctrine of imputation, instead of being full of moral unreality, is in accordance with all that is deepest in the philosophy of evolution. For are we not continually being taught that in order to take a true view of the value of any single thing, we must view it not as it is at a particular moment, but in the light of its tendency? We must ask not merely 'what,' but 'whence' and 'whither.'

(4) It is all pure grace—the free outpouring of unmerited love. The Christians are 'God's workmanship,' His new creation. He, in Christ, had wrought the work all by Himself. They, the subjects of it, had contributed nothing. It remained for them only to welcome and to correspond. This is the summing up of man's legitimate attitude towards God. This is faith. It is at its first stage simply the acceptance of a divine mercy in all its undeserved and unconditional largeness; but it passes at once, as

soon as ever the nature of the divine gift is realized, into a glad co-operation with the divine purpose.

This then is, in outline, the method of the great salvation, of which the Asiatic Christians had been and were the subjects.

DIVISION I. § 4. CHAPTER II. 11-22.

Salvation in the church.

GOD's deliverance or 'salvation' of mankind is a deliverance of individuals indeed, but of individuals in and through a society; not of isolated individuals, but of members of a body.

It is and has been a popular religious idea that the primary aim of the gospel is to produce saved individuals; and that it is a matter of secondary importance that the saved individuals should afterwards combine to form churches for their mutual spiritual profit, and for promoting the work of preaching the gospel. But this way of conceiving the matter is a reversal of the order of ideas in the Bible. 'The salvation' in the Bible is supposed usually 'to reach the individual through the community¹.' God's dealings with us in redemption thus follow the lines of His dealings with us in our natural developement. For man stands

¹ Sanday and Headlam's *Romans*, pp. 122-124.

out in history as a 'social animal.' His individual developement, by a divine law of his constitution, is only rendered possible because he is first of all a member of some society, tribe, or nation, or state. Through membership in such a society alone, and through the submissions and limitations on his personal liberty which such membership involves, does he become capable of any degree of free or high developement as an individual. This law, then, of man's nature appears equally in the method of his redemption. Under the old covenant it was to members of the 'commonwealth of Israel' that the blessings of the covenant belonged. Under the new covenant St. Paul still conceives of the same commonwealth as subsisting (as we shall see directly), and as fulfilling no less than formerly the same religious functions. True, it has been fundamentally reconstituted and enlarged to include the believers of all nations, and not merely one nation; but it is still the same commonwealth, or polity, or church; and it is still through the church that God's 'covenant' dealings reach the individual.

It is for this reason that St. Paul goes on to describe the state of the Asiatic Christians,

before their conversion, as a state of alienation from the 'commonwealth of Israel.' They were 'Gentiles in the flesh,' that is by the physical fact that they were not Jews; and were contemptuously described as the uncircumcised by those who, as Jews, were circumcised by human hands. And he conceives this to be only another way of describing alienation from God and His manifold covenants of promise, and from the Messiah, the hope of Israel and of mankind. They were without the Church of God, and therefore presumably without God and without hope.

Wherefore remember, that aforetime ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ.

This alienation of Gentiles from the divine covenant was represented in the structure of the temple at Jerusalem by a beautifully-worked marble balustrade, separating the outer from the inner court, upon which stood columns at regular intervals, bearing inscriptions, some in Greek and some in Latin characters, to warn

aliens not to enter the holy place. One of the Greek inscriptions was discovered a few years ago, and is now to be read in the Muscum of Constantinople. It runs thus: 'No alien to pass within the balustrade round the temple and the enclosure. Whosoever shall be caught so doing must blame himself for the penalty of death which he will incur.'

This 'middle wall of partition' was vividly in St. Paul's memory. He was in prison at Rome at the time of his writing this epistle, in part at least because he was believed to have brought Trophimus, an Ephesian, within the sacred enclosure at Jerusalem. 'He brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled the holy place.'

It was this 'middle wall of partition,' representing the exclusiveness of Jewish ordinances, which St. Paul rejoiced to believe Christ had abolished. He had made Jew and Gentile one by bringing both alike to God in one body and on a new basis.

There were in fact two partitions in the Jewish temple of great symbolical importance. There was the veil which hid the holy of holies, and symbolized the alienation of man from God¹; and there was 'the middle wall of partition'

¹ Hebr. ix. 8.

already described, representing the exclusion of the world from the privileges of the people of God. The Pharisaic Jews ignored the spiritual lessons of the first partition, and devoutly believed in the permanence of the second. But Saul, while yet a Pharisee, had felt the reality of the first, and had found in his own experience that the abolition of this first barrier by Christ involved also the annihilation of the second.

It is in the Epistle to the Colossians that he lays stress upon the abolition in Christ of the enmity between man and God. 'It was the good pleasure of the Father . . . through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross.' 'You, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh . . . did he quicken together with Christ, having forgiven us all our trespasses ; having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us : and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.' So with the help of various metaphors does St. Paul strive to express the mighty truth that, by the shedding of Christ's blood, that is to say by His sacrifice of perfected obedience, the way had been opened for the forgiveness of our sins and our recon-

ciliation to God in one life, one Spirit. But the symbols and instruments of that former alienation from God which St. Paul had experienced so bitterly, were to his mind the 'ordinances' of the Jewish law. These, he had come to feel, had no other function than to awaken and deepen the sense of sin which they were powerless to overcome. They were nothing but 'a bond written against us'; a continual record of condemnation. To trust in the observance of ordinances was to remain an unreconciled sinner, alienated in mind and unpurified in heart. On the other hand, to have faith in Jesus and receive from Him the unmerited gift of the divine pardon and the Spirit of sonship was, for a Jew, to cast away all that trust in the observance of the ordinances of his nation which was so dear to his heart. It was at once to place himself among the sinners of the Gentiles. For in Jesus Christ all men were indeed brought near to God, but not as meritorious Jews; rather as common men and common sinners, needing and accepting all alike the undeserved mercy of a heavenly Father. Thus it was that Christ, in breaking down one partition, had broken down the other also. In opening the way to God by a simple human trust in a

heavenly Father, and not by the complicated arrangements of a special law, He had put all men on the same level of need and of acceptance. He had not indeed abolished the covenant or the covenant people, but He had enlarged its area and altered its basis: there was still to be one visible body or people of the covenant, but membership in it was to be open to all, Jew and Gentile alike, who would feel their need of and put their trust in Jesus. This is what St. Paul proceeds to express, and little more need be added to explain his words. In the 'blood' or 'blood-shedding' of Jesus—that is, His self-sacrifice for men, His obedience carried to the point of the surrender of His life—a way had been opened to the Father that was purely human, that belonged to the Gentiles who had been 'far off' as well as to Jews who were already 'nigh' in the divine covenant. And in being brought near to God by faith, and not by Jewish ordinances, Jew and Gentile had been reconciled on a common basis—the two had been made one in 'the flesh,' that is, the manhood of Christ, for no other reason than because the 'law of commandments contained in (special Jewish) ordinances,' which had hitherto been the basis of separation, was now once for all

'abolished.' Henceforth there was one new man, or new manhood, in Christ, in which all men were, potentially at least, reconciled to God and to one another by His self-sacrifice upon the cross. And to the knowledge of this new manhood all men were being gradually brought by the 'preaching of peace' or of the gospel, which had its origin from Jesus crucified and risen, and which, even now that Jesus was invisibly acting through His apostolic and other ministers, St. Paul attributes directly to Him.

But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even the law of commandments contained in ordinances*; that he might create in himself of the twain one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.

Now we can turn from the negative to the positive statement, and observe what St. Paul says of the new privileges of the once heathen converts. He pictures them under four metaphors, each describing a social state.

(1) They are citizens in the holy state, the commonwealth of the people consecrated to God—citizens with full rights, and no longer strangers or unenfranchised residents (sojourners).

(2) More intimately still, they belong to the family or household of God.

(3) They are being built all together into a sanctuary for God to dwell in—a holy structure of which the foundation stones are the apostles, and the Christian prophets who were their companions; and of which the corner-stone, determining the lines of the building and compacting it into one, is Jesus Christ, according to the word of God by Isaiah, ‘Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone of sure foundation.’

(4) But the metaphor of the building passes into the metaphor of the growing plant. Christ is, as St. Peter says, ‘a *living* stone¹.’ He not only determines the lines of the spiritual structure, but He pervades the whole of it as a presence and spirit, so that every other human ‘stone’ is also alive and growing with His life.

So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the house-

¹ 1 Peter ii. 4.

hold of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone ; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord ; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

These are indeed metaphors expressive of glorious realities, which have no doubt become dulled in meaning through a conventional Christianity, which involves no sacrifice and therefore attains no sense of blessedness, but which a little meditation may easily restore to something of their original freshness.

(I) The idea of the chosen people all through the Old Testament is that they are as a whole consecrated to God. Priests and kings appointed by God to their several offices may indeed fulfil special functions in the national life, yet the fundamental idea is never lost that the entire nation is holy, 'a kingdom of priests.' It is because this is true that the prophets can appeal as they do to the people in general, as well as to priests and rulers, as sharing altogether the responsibility of the national life. Now the whole of this idea is transferred, only deepened and intensified, to the Christian Church. That too has its divinely-ordained ministers, its differentiation of functions in the one body, but the whole

body is priestly, and all are citizens—not merely residents but citizens, that is, intelligent participators in a common corporate life consecrated to God. How truly realized this idea was in the early Christian communities, St. Paul's letters are our best witnesses. They are really—except the pastoral epistles—letters to the churches and not to the clergy. It is the whole body which is at Thessalonica and Corinth to concern itself with the exercise of moral discipline¹—the whole body in the Galatian churches and at Colossae who are to concern themselves with the apprehension and protection of the full Christian truth. They are all to be 'perfectly initiated' in Christ Jesus, full participators in the affairs of the divine society². Whatever needs to be said afterwards about the special functions of special officers, this is the first thing to be said and recognized; and it gives us a profound sense of the distance we have fallen from our ideal. The laity, it is generally understood among us, are to come to church and perhaps to communion, are to accept the ministries of religion at marriages and funerals, and are to subscribe a little money to religious objects; but they may leave it to the clergy, as a matter of course, to carry on

¹ 1 Thess. v. 14; 1 Cor. v.-vi. 11.

² Col. i. 28.

the business of religion—that is, worship and doctrine, for discipline has been dropped out—and confine themselves to a certain amount of irresponsible criticism of the sermons of the clergy and their proceedings generally.

For this state of things—this very false sacerdotalism—the responsibility is generally laid at the door of ‘clerical arrogance.’ It is not necessary to consider how large a factor in the result clerical arrogance has really been, for certainly what alone has given the clergy the opportunity to put themselves in false isolation, and what has been an immensely more powerful factor in the general result, has been the spiritual apathy of the mass of church members, an apathy which began as soon as the Christian profession began to cost men little or nothing.

Are we to set to work to revive St. Paul’s ideal of the life of a Church? If so, what we need is not more Christians, but better Christians. We want to make the moral meaning of church membership understood and its conditions appreciated. We want to make men understand that it costs something to be a Christian; that to be a Christian, that is a Churchman, is to be an intelligent participator in a corporate life consecrated to God, and to concern

oneself therefore, as a matter of course, in all that touches the corporate life—its external as well as its spiritual conditions. For the houses people live in, their wages, their social and commercial relations to one another, their amusements, the education they receive, the literature they read, these, no less truly than religious forces strictly so called, affect intimately the health and well-being of any society of men. We Christians are fellow-citizens together in the commonwealth that is consecrated to God, a commonwealth of mortal men with bodies as well as souls.

(2) But St. Paul also describes the Church as the 'household of God.' When our Lord was speaking to St. Peter about the ministry which was being entrusted to the apostles, He said to him, 'Who then is the faithful and wise steward whom his Lord shall set over his household to give them their portion of food in due season¹?' This description opens to us part of the meaning of the divine household. A household is a place where a family is provided for, where there is a regular and orderly supply of ordinary needs. And the Church is the divine household in which God has provided stewards to make

¹ Luke xii. 42.

regular spiritual provision for men, so that they shall feel and know themselves members of a family, understood, sympathized with, helped, encouraged, disciplined, fed. What in fact are the sacraments and sacramental rites, what are baptism, confirmation and communion, marriage and ordination, the administration of the word of God, the dealings with the penitent, the sick, the dead, but the 'portions of food in due season,' the orderly distribution of the bread of life in the family or household of God?

But there is another idea which, in St. Paul's mind, attaches itself strongly to the idea of the 'divine family.' It is that in this household we are sons and not servants—that is intelligent co-operators with God, and not merely submissive slaves. It is noticeable how often he speaks with horror of Christians allowing themselves again to be 'subject to ordinances,' or to 'the weak and beggarly rudiments,' the alphabet of that earlier education when even children are treated as slaves under mere obedience. 'Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years, I am afraid of you ¹.' 'Why do ye subject yourselves to ordinances, handle not, taste not, touch not ².' It is perfectly true to say that what

¹ Gal. iv. 11; v. 1.

² Col. ii. 20-22.

St. Paul is deprecating is a return to Jewish or pagan observances. But this is not all. He demands not a change of observance only, but a change of spirit. Their attitude towards observances as such is to be different. Not that St. Paul does not insist on that readiness to obey reasonable authority which is a condition of corporate life, or would hesitate to lay stress upon corporate religious acts in the Christian body. The truth is very far from that. 'We have no such custom, neither the churches of God,' is an argument which ought to be sufficient to suppress eccentricity. To 'keep the traditions' is a mark of a good Christian ¹. 'A man that is heretical' (or rather 'factious') after the first and second admonition is to be 'refused' ². Government is to be a constant element in the Christian life. But the character of authority and of obedience is to be changed. The authority is to be reasonable authority, and the obedience intelligent obedience. Passive obedience to an authority which does not explain itself, whether in a spiritual director or in the Church as a whole, St. Paul would have thought of meanly as a Christian virtue. And the multiplication of authoritative observances he would have dreaded as a bond-

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 2, 16.

² Tit. iii. 10.

age. Our Lord was very unwilling to give His disciples, when He was on earth, much direction. And St. Paul is true to his Master's spirit. Our life should be ordered by principles, rather than directed in detail. For to rely upon direction from outside dwarfs our sense of personal responsibility, and personal relationship to the divine Spirit. A certain amount of confusion, hesitation, difference, due to men feeling their way, due to their different individualities having free scope, St. Paul would apparently have thought preferable to that sort of order which is the product of a very strong and exacting external government, and to an undue exaltation of the virtue of passive obedience.

(3) St. Paul describes the Church as a sanctuary which is gradually to be built for God to dwell in. We remember how our Lord had said of the temple at Jerusalem, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' 'He spake,' St. John explains, 'of the temple of his body¹.' That—His own humanity proved triumphant over death—was to be henceforth the tabernacle of God's presence among men. Where that is God is, and the true worship of the Father in spirit and in truth. But that body, raised again

¹ John ii. 19-21.

the third day and become 'quickenings Spirit' as the body of the risen Christ, takes within its influence the whole circle of believers. The 'body of Christ,' which is God's temple, comes to mean the Church which lives in Christ's life, and worships in Christ's Spirit. This is still the Church of the fathers of the old covenant, but fundamentally reconstituted. God, as St. James perceived¹, was fulfilling His promise to 'build again the tabernacle of David which had fallen.' It was being built anew upon the apostles and their companions the prophets, the immediate ambassadors of Christ, as foundation-stones of the renewed building, who themselves have their positions determined and secured by Christ Jesus as chief corner-stone. It was a spiritual fabric combining, like a Gothic cathedral, various parts or 'several buildings,' with their distinctive characteristics, all however united in one construction, one great sanctuary of a redeemed humanity in which God dwells.

The metaphor suggests the combination of national and individual differences in real unity. It encourages us to pay due regard to the free development of our own characters and capacities, but also to develop ourselves as parts of

¹ Acts xv. 16.

a greater whole, always remembering that the work of a Christian individual or a local church is in God's sight measured not by its isolated result, but by the contribution it makes to the life of the whole body. An excessive individuality, a selfish development is, even in proportion to its strength, a source of weakness to the whole. By its relation to the whole life of the Church all Christian effort must be both invigorated and restrained.

The metaphor suggests further that the social organization of the Church is an organization for worship. It is a house and a citizenship, because it is also a sanctuary. The strength of corporate Christianity is to be measured by the vitality of corporate worship. A church life in which the sanctuary is not the centre, for all the vigour which it may show in learning, or preaching, or philanthropy, is after all but a maimed life.

14 But the Church, as a visible organization of men, can be what it is—the city of God, His household and His sanctuary—only because it is pervaded by Christ's life and spirit. The 'stones of the building' are not merely placed side by side of one another, or held together by any external agency of government; they

are as branches of a living tree, limbs of a living body. In this recurrent thought, which will be presented to us in another form when St. Paul comes to speak of the head and the body, is the interpretation of all his theory of the Church. It is verily and indeed the extension of the life of Christ.

How are we to receive this great and manifold ideal of what the Church means¹? It is by meditating upon it till St. Paul's conceptions—and not any lower or narrower ones, Roman or Anglican or Nonconformist—become vivid to our minds. Then, knowing what we aim at restoring, we shall seek, in each parish and ecclesiastical centre, to concentrate almost more than to extend the Church, to give it spiritual, moral, and social reality, rather than to multiply a membership which means little. For if men can understand the meaning of the Church, as the city of God, the family of God, the sanctuary of God, in the world, there is little fear that whatever is good in humanity will fail of allegiance to her. The kings of the earth will bring their glory and honour into her, and the nations of the earth shall walk in her light.

¹ See app. note D, p. 264, on the Brotherhood of St. Andrew.

DIVISION I. § 5. CHAPTER III.

Paul the apostle of catholicity.

ST. PAUL has unfolded the dimensions of the revelation of God given in the catholic church. The interests of the whole of mankind and of the whole universe which it is to subserve—that is its breadth: the eternal and slowly realized intention of God of which it is the expression—that is its length: the spiritual elevation up to which it takes men—that is its height: the gulf of sin and misery from which it rescues them—that is its depth. And now he is about to press upon the Asiatic Christians the moral obligations which this great catholic brotherhood involves. He begins his exhortation and enforces it by reminding them of what he was enduring as a prisoner for Christ's sake—'For this cause (i. e. seeing that all this is true), I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you, the Gentiles.' But when he has thus made a beginning, he pauses to add weight

to his appeal by emphasizing a personal but very important consideration. The particular truth of the catholicity of the Church had been in quite a special sense entrusted to him, Paul, personally, as apostle of the Gentiles. He assumes that they have heard of this, his special commission, and that it was the subject of a special revelation to himself¹. Indeed the fact must have formed part of his teaching at Ephesus and throughout Asia, for his mind was full of it; he had contended for it against strong opposition in his epistle to the Galatians²; he had asserted it in his speech on the occasion of his being made a prisoner at Jerusalem: and he had quite recently explained it 'in brief compass' in the letter to the Colossians which was intended to have, in part at least, the same readers as his present epistle³. This special revelation then and accompanying commission justifies him in particular, and more than any of

¹ Acts xxii. 17-21. 'While I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem. . . . Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles.'

² Gal. i. 15. 'It was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, *even* from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles.'

³ Col. i. 24-29; iv. 3, 4.

the other apostles, in pressing upon his converts the doctrine which forms the special topic of this epistle.

But to think of his special office as apostle of a catholic society, is to think also of its extraordinary difficulty.

When we set ourselves in our own later age to rehabilitate the sense of church membership, we feel at once the strength of the forces against us; we realize how much the feeling of blood-kinship in the family counts for, or the wider kinship of national life, or the common interests of our professions or our classes, compared to the feeble sense of fellowship which comes from a church membership which is so largely conventional. Most assuredly we feel the difficulty of what we have in hand. But we cannot feel it more intensely than St. Paul felt the difficulty involved in the very idea of a human brotherhood in which national distinctions were obliterated. After all, the degree of unity impressed by the Roman Empire upon the different nations it embraced was superficial. On the whole it left men to walk in their own ways. In particular it did not succeed in breaking down the barriers of Jewish isolation. A society in which men should be neither Jews nor Gen-

tiles, Greeks nor barbarians, bond nor free, but all should be welded into one manhood by the pressure of a common and constraining bond of brotherhood—a society in which even the savage and brutal Scythian should have equal fellowship with Greeks and Jews¹—represented what had never yet been accomplished, and what the most sanguine might reasonably have thought impossible. The history of the Church, though not yet much more than thirty years old, had served already to emphasize the difficulty of the undertaking. We read the record of the first Jerusalem Church with its communism of love and sympathy, and it seems the perfect realization of the Christian spirit of brotherhood. So it was, but under comparatively easy conditions. For all that community were Jews with common traditions, sympathies, habits, ways of looking at things. They could behave as brethren, in the glow of their fresh enthusiasm at finding that the long-expected kingdom of Christ was now an actual fact, and its triumph to be immediately expected, without any real bridging of the gulfs which yawn between different sorts of men. That these gulfs still remained to be bridged soon appeared. It became manifest that

¹ Col. iii. 11.

Council, 'Council of the Councils' but as he summed up Christian orthodoxy as a whole, and without more accepting the Jewish law and custom. The Council is therefore accepted a compromise by accepting of the Council *concordia cum iudaeis et gentilibus* v. Jewish manner. But the compromise did not seem to overcome the difficulty. St. Paul knew the power of opposition in the great assembly of the Council as that very Council of Jerusalem which had been previously known to the race of Jews. In fact, the true difficulty of the law of ceremonial only then appeared when the obligation to live according to Jewish law began to be enforced. There indeed God and Christ entered. Without going any further than this single point of Christian experience, there is every reason why St. Paul should have declared that for all circumstances, 'ye shall love one another' is constantly with every change of circumstance, becoming 'a new righteousness' involving new difficulties and challenges about the efforts of the human will. The true difficulty, only in a few words here, is in St. Paul's mind, and making his measure and weight his words, when he writes to Philippians

to beg him to receive his former runaway slave, 'no longer as a slave, but as a brother beloved'¹.

And we cannot but pause and ask, in view of all the moral discipline for men of various kinds which St. Paul sees to be involved in the simple obligation to belong to one Christian body²,—what would have been his feelings if he had heard of the doctrine which cuts at the root of all this discipline by declaring that religion is only concerned with the relation of the soul to God, and that Christians may combine as they please in as many religious bodies as suits their varying tastes?

This difficulty in the very idea of a catholic brotherhood of men explains the extraordinary earnestness with which St. Paul proceeds to emphasize that indeed this, and nothing less than this, is the divine mystery (or 'secret'), which, held back from all eternity in the mind of God, was only now being disclosed through Christ's consecrated messengers, and specially through St. Paul himself, the apostle of the Gentiles. The incredible nature of the idea clogs St. Paul's language, and almost makes shipwreck of his grammar. All the depth of Christian doctrine is necessary as background

¹ Phil. 16.

² Eph. iv. 1. 3.

to recommend and justify this otherwise entirely 'supernatural' ideal—this marvellous climax of the workings and revelations of God. The spectacle of a catholic brotherhood, with all that it promises of universal unity beyond itself, is a lesson even to the angels of what the manifold wisdom of God can conceive and accomplish.

We have got into a habit of talking about the 'brotherhood of man' as if it was an easy and obvious truth. All our experience of our English relations with races of a different colour to our own, nay, all our experience of class divisions at home, might have served to check this easy-going sort of language. If we will consent to pause and reflect on the actual difficulty of behaving or feeling as brethren should behave and feel towards men of other races and of other educations and habits than our own, we may be more inclined to believe that it is only through some fundamental eradication of selfishness and inherent narrowness that it can be made possible; only when we begin to live from some centre greater than ourselves. And that is the moral meaning of the constant doctrine of the New Testament, that only through being reconciled to God can we be reconciled to one

another—only in Christ that men can permanently and satisfactorily learn to love one another, when racial and educational and personal antipathies make for separation and not for unity.

Now perhaps we are in a position to read with greater intelligence what St. Paul wrote about 'the dispensation of the divine mystery,' i.e. 'the stewardship of the divine secret,' of the brotherhood of all men in Christ or the catholicity of the Church, which had been committed to him by the 'revelation' which followed his conversion to Christ¹.

The doctrine of the brotherhood of men is in fact as much a peculiarly Christian doctrine as that of divine sonship, and both alike are, in the New Testament language, represented as realized only within the community of the baptized. The facts of New Testament language compel us to say and to recognize this². But

¹ Acts xxii. 21; xxvi. 17, 18.

² Thus the limitation of the term 'brotherhood' to Christians is implied in 1 Pet. ii. 17, 'Honour all men. Love the brotherhood;' and in 2 Pet. i. 7, 'In your love of the brethren supply love' (i.e. in the narrower and closer circle of believers, learn the wider and all embracing attitude towards men as men); and in 1 Cor. v. 11, 'Any man that is named a brother.' The word brother is throughout the New Testament used of *Christians* only, except where, in the Acts, it is used by Jews of Jews.

we are bound to recognize also that they are truths which, when they are heard, are welcomed by the natural conscience everywhere. For as all men are 'God's offspring¹,' by the very fact of their creation as men, so they are fitted to receive the privilege of sonship: and as they are 'made of one²,' so they are fitted to realize the privilege of brotherhood. It is but to say the same thing in other words, if we insist that Christians are the elect body, to realize and express among men an idea of human nature which is the only true idea, and which, overlaid and forgotten as it may have been, has never ceased to stir in man's heart and conscience everywhere. The elect are elected for no other purpose than to make manifest what all men are capable of becoming, and, if they will obey God, are destined to become.

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles,—if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward: how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ: which in other Our Lord's language about brotherhood applies to the circle of the disciples, except Matt. xxv. 40, 'One of these my brethren,' i. e. the wretched.

¹ Acts xvii. 28.

² Acts xvii. 26.

generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; *to wit*, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly *places* might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him. Wherefore I ask that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which are your glory.

There are a few points in this passage which still require explanation.

1. What is St. Paul referring to when he says 'As I wrote afore in few words whereby, when ye read¹, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ' or (if I may venture to retranslate it) 'as I wrote before in brief, by

¹ Dr. Hort thinks 'read' is a technical word for reading the Scriptures, and that this reading of the Old Testament Scriptures is to enable them to appreciate St. Paul's 'understanding in the secret of the Christ.' But I doubt if so technical a use of 'read' can be made out.

comparison with which, as ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the secret of the Christ'? It is generally supposed that he is referring to the verses in the first chapter of this epistle (i. 9, 10, &c.), in which he speaks of the 'mystery' or 'secret' of the divine will now disclosed. But his point appears to be rather that he had elsewhere written in brief about his own special commission to preach the Gentile gospel; and the more probable reference seems to be to the Epistle to the Colossians which was written almost simultaneously with this epistle, probably just previously, and was intended to be read at some at least, if not all, of the same churches as this circular epistle, that is to say at Laodicea and Colossae at least, and probably more widely. In that epistle (i. 25 ff.) he had really dwelt on his special commission in almost the same terms as here, and comparison with what he said there would indeed assist those he was now addressing to understand his knowledge in the 'revealed secret of the Christ.'

2. How can St. Paul, who insists continually that he is one of the apostles, call them, without self-complacency, God's holy apostles? The answer to this is that 'holiness' means 'consecration.' Any one is 'holy' or a 'saint' (the

same word) who is consecrated to God in any special way. Such consecration lays upon him an obligation to moral goodness, which is what *we* mean by holiness, but it precedes the fulfilment of the obligation. All Christians are holy (or 'saints') because they are Christians, all apostles because they are apostles. As for St. Paul's personal estimate of himself as an individual, we have it just below. In view of his past sins, when he was 'kicking against the pricks,' and, albeit in ignorance, persecuting the Church, he calls himself 'less than the least of all the holy.'

3. St. Paul conceives his function to be to 'make men see,' or 'bring into the light' a long hidden secret of God now in part disclosed to the apostles, and to be by them disclosed to the world—in part, for its contents are still 'unsearchable' in their depth and in the 'manifoldness' of divine wisdom which they imply. But what is disclosed is no afterthought of God. It is an eternal purpose; and it is all of a piece with the original idea of creation: it is a 'secret . . . hidden in God who created all things.' Redemption in fact interprets to angels and men what God's purpose in creation originally was. To minister to this disclosure is enough for any

man. It makes all St. Paul's tribulations only such as it is worth while to bear; and the Gentiles, in their turn, should find their glory in his tribulations as an evidence of how much he thought it worth while to suffer in what is their cause no less truly than his.

Here, as in the first chapter, the consideration of the glory, and consequently the difficulty, of the gospel which St. Paul has to deliver leads him off—just at the point where he seems to be resuming the uncompleted sentence with which he began—into a prayer that the Asiatic Christians may have strength given them to apprehend the wealth of their spiritual position and opportunity. He invokes God as the universal 'father (*pater*) from whom every family (*patria*)—every company of men knit together by common relation to one father—is named,' because this has direct reference to his purpose. All men recognize family, or blood relations and obligations. St. Paul reminds them that every conceivable society on earth or in heaven which is bound by the ties of a common fatherhood, derives its 'name' and therefore its significance from a larger relationship, an all-embracing relationship of which these lower ones are but shadows—the relationship to the one Father:

and he calls upon the one Father to strengthen men to transcend all narrownesses of family or blood, and rise to realize their position in the great family, the great brotherhood under the one Father. To do this a strengthening of the inner man, or inner life, by the divine Spirit is indeed needed. Christ must be not only possessed by Christians, but realized. He must dwell in their hearts by the realizing power of an active personal faith. Where this is so—where faith is vigorous—there life must be rooted and founded on love. Christian faith involves love. For it is faith in a Father and His Son and His Spirit; and love, and nothing but love, is the gift of the Father in the Son by the Spirit. This love then will strengthen them, in the fellowship of the saints or consecrated ones altogether, to apprehend God's work and purpose in all its dimensions—breadth and length and depth and height—and to know Christ's love (which yet passes knowledge and remains unknowable), and to find their whole being, not as separate individuals, but as one body praying and working and thinking together, expanded to take in the fulness of what God is, the full complement of the divine life. To be thus enlightened and enlarged is what St. Paul under-

stands by being a 'good catholic': that is what he prays all these Asiatic Christians may become.

And his prayer passes into a doxology—an ascription of glory to God because He is able to realize even what passes our power to conceive or to ask for; and that without doing more for us than He has already pledged Himself to do and actually begun to accomplish in us. And this glory he would have eternally ascribed to God in the Church which lives by His life; and also (where alone God can never fail of His full rights) in Him in whom alone God's life is perfectly realized, and worship perfectly rendered Him under conditions of manhood, in Jesus the Christ.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him *be* the glory in the

church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.

St. Augustine, with his eye on the imperfections of the Church, speaks ¹ of 'the glory of love . . . alive but yet frost-bound. The root is alive, but the branches are almost dry. There is a heart alive within, and within are leaves and fruits; but they are waiting for a summer.' That is surely what we feel. The world cries out for brotherhood. We are perpetually explaining that brotherhood can only become actual, in the long run, where men know themselves to be, and in fact are, sons of God. We are continually pointing out that external legislative social reforms can only effect good where there exists, to respond to them and to use them, some strength and purity of inward character: that outward reforms without moral redemption would effect evil rather than good. All this is true and it is necessary to explain it. But the convincing demonstration begins at that point where Christianity makes man feel, and see in fact, that it contains in itself the remedy for social evils, because it has the spirit of love: where the Church is so actually presented as that men should feel and know that this is a true human

¹ *In Epist. Joan. ad Parth.* v. 10.

brotherhood. It is the social, human, brotherly power of the Church which is what is at the present moment best calculated to win the consciences and convince the intellects of men. But this actual living spirit of self-sacrificing love—this spirit of real brotherhood—how ‘frost-bound’ it is! How large the area of the Church, how many its institutions, where it is not (to say the least) the most obvious thing represented! In fact, social reform, and that the most thorough and the most permanent, requires nothing more than that professing Christians should be better Christians, Christians who really believe what St. Paul and St. John say about the love of the brethren. Come then, O breath of the divine Spirit, and breathe upon these bones of the Christian Church, that they may live!

And outside the area of nominal Christianity how ‘frost-bound’ our evangelizing love. Surely the Church of England, as part of the expansive British nation, has an apostleship to the nations comparable to St. Paul’s. Yet missionary zeal, as directed towards the natives of India, or Japan, or Africa, is a very restricted thing; noticeably restricted it must be confessed among those who most love the name of Catholic: and almost non-existent in the great majority of those who are

yet members of the national Church. But it cannot be too deeply felt that to St. Paul the reconciliation of men with God is inseparable from the reconciliation of man with man. The atonement with God that is not an atonement among men he would not own. A peace with God that leaves us content that Hindoos and Japanese and Africans should not be of our religion is a false peace. A Christian who is not really in heart and will a missionary is not a Christian at all. Missionary effort is not a speciality of a few Christians, though, like every other part of Christian life, it has its special organs. It is an essential, never to be forgotten, part of all true Christian living, and thinking, and praying.

The missionary obligation of the Church depends, no doubt, chiefly on the command of Christ, 'Go ye and make disciples of all the nations.' But it is made intelligible when we realize that Christianity is really a catholic religion, and that only in proportion as its catholicity becomes a reality is its true power and richness exhibited. Each new race which is introduced into the Church not only itself receives the blessings of our religion, but reacts upon it to bring out new and unsuspected aspects and

beauties of its truth and influence. It has been so when Greeks, and Latins, and Teutons, and Kelts, and Slavs have each in turn been brought into the growing circle of believers. How impoverished was the exhibition of Christianity which the Jewish Christians were capable of giving by themselves! How much of the treasures of wisdom and power which lie hid in Christ awaited the Greek intellect, and the Roman spirit of government, and the Teutonic individuality, and the temper and character of the Kelt and the Slav, before they could leap into light! And can we doubt that now again not only would Indians, and Japanese, and Africans, and Chinamen be the better for Christianity, but that Christianity would be unspeakably also the richer for their adhesion—for the gifts which the subtlety of India, and the grace of Japan, and the silent patience of China are capable of bringing into the city of God.

Come, then, O breath of the divine Spirit, and breathe upon the dead bones of the Christian churches that forget that they are evangelists of the nations, that they may live and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army, an army with banners.

DIVISION I. § 6. CHAPTER IV. 1-16.

The unity of the church.

THIS Epistle to the Ephesians, viewed as a whole and from the point of view of a sympathetic intelligence, has a remarkable unity, and a unity progressively developed. Thus, first of all, the apostle opened the imagination of his hearers or readers to consider the place which the catholic church holds in the divine counsels for the universe, in the realization of the human ideal, and in the work of redemption from sin (chap. i and ii). Then he proceeded to justify and explain his own activity in the cause of catholicity, and made them feel at once the glory and the profound difficulty of the ideal of unity in diversity which it involves (chap. iii). It follows naturally and logically that he should set the Church before them as an actually existing organization, and bid them study it exactly and note the grounds of its unity and the common end to which its different elements or members

are meant to minister ; and this is what he actually does in the fourth chapter (I-16). Viewed, however, as a matter of grammatical structure, it is probable that this passage forms another digression—the real necessity of the argument acting as an overmastering motive which pulls contrary to the immediate grammatical purpose of the writer. Thus he had begun, at the beginning of chapter iii, to pass from the doctrinal exposition which is involved in his opening chapters to practical exhortation. The Asiatic members of the catholic church are to be exhorted to live up to their calling : to turn their backs deliberately on their old heathen habits, and to conform themselves entirely to the principles of their new state. To this exhortation he actually and finally attains at chapter iv. 17. The intervening passage (a chapter and a half) is occupied, first, with the digression which we have just considered at length, about St. Paul's mission to the Gentiles and the difficulty of its realization, and with the great prayer which that topic suggests (chap. iii) ; secondly, with another digression on the character of the unity of the Church. This is, I say, probably the case grammatically. For 'I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles' (iii. 1) is almost un-

mistakably intended to introduce a moral appeal to which his imprisonment for the sake of those to whom he writes adds weight and force¹. It is taken up, after a digression, in iv. 1, 'I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily'; but the appeal there begun yields anew to the necessity of further exposition, and only reaches its free expression in iv. 17, 'This therefore I say and testify in the Lord'; after which point we have moral exhortation and little else.

Now, therefore, we are to occupy ourselves with what is grammatically a second digression, but logically and really a most necessary step in the exposition of St. Paul's thoughts—the subject of the unity of the church catholic, its nature and obligations. Conscious of the profound difficulty of welding naturally antagonistic elements, such as Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free men, into one catholic fellowship, St. Paul appeals to the Asiatic churches with all the force which he can command as a prisoner on their account, to 'walk' as their catholic calling in-

¹ And not as Dr. Robertson (Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, ed. ii. vol. i. pt. ii. p. 951) suggests, to introduce a prayer to God, which is resumed in iii. 14. The 'For this cause' which is repeated in iii. 14 is not nearly so significant as 'the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,' which is taken up again in iv. 1.

volves ; that is, to exhibit all those moral qualities which are necessary to maintain peace under difficult circumstances—a modest estimate of oneself (humility or ‘lowliness’), a mildness in mutual relations (‘meekness’), an habitual refusal to pass quick judgements on what one cannot but condemn or dislike (‘longsuffering’), a deliberate forbearance one of another based on love. They are to accept one another as brethren, with the rights of brethren. And the reason why they should exhibit these qualities is not far to seek : they actually share one common supernatural life—the imparted life of the Spirit—and they are, therefore, to make it their deliberate object to preserve this actual spiritual unity in its appropriate outward expression, that is in harmonious fellowship,—‘giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’

But at this point the idea of the unity of the Church is felt to need fuller exposition. In what sense are Christians one ? They are one as *one body* or organization, made up no doubt of a multitude of differing individual members, but all bound into one, under Christ for their head, by the fact that the *one Spirit*, which is Christ’s supreme gift, is imparted to the whole organiza-

tion and every member of it: and this common corporate life, where the elements are so different, is made possible by the *one hope* reaching forward into an eternal world, which was set before them all when they received their call into the body of Christ. This should be enough to annihilate lower and shorter-lived differences. 'There is one body¹ and one spirit even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.' It follows from this that there is another threefold unity. For the existence of the common head involves a common *allegiance to Him as Lord*, an allegiance which is justified by what He is *believed to be* by all Christians; an allegiance, further, which is more than an outward fealty, being cemented by an actual incorporation into His life which takes place through the speaking symbol of the *laver of regeneration*². 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism.' But once more. This common union with and under Christ in the Spirit, is not anything less than union with *the one and only God and Father*, who is *over all* as the one head (even 'the head of Christ is God'), *through all* as the pervading presence, *in all* as the active

¹ I have interpreted this word in the light of what is said in verse 16.

² Tit. iii. 5.

life, 'one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all things.' Thus their unity is the deepest and most ultimate conceivable: it has a width and range from which no one can be excluded: while it has a closeness and cogency like the unity of blood.

To realize what this unity is and may be, involves on our part a continual looking out of ourselves, out of all individual, social and national differences, up to the common source of all the gifts of all Christians. Whatever each one possesses is simply the gift of the divine bounty or grace, given to him by a definite act of bestowal, varying merely in kind and degree according to the sovereign will of Christ the Lord, the only giver; and it is therefore to be used in His service and for His ends. The Psalmist had sung of the divine king of Israel mounting as an earthly conqueror unto his sanctuary throne in Zion after making captives and receiving gifts from among his enemies without exception.

'Thou hast gone up into the heights,
Thou hast led captives captive;
Thou hast received gifts among men, yea from the
rebellious also¹.'

It stands to reason that to St. Paul's mind this

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 18 (Delitzsch).

conception is realized nowhere but in Christ. Its application to Christ is in fact assumed—‘therefore,’ i.e. with a view to Christ, ‘he’ or rather ‘it,’ the Scripture ‘saith’—and the passage is given free interpretation, and, more than this, free modification, on the basis of this assumption. For (1) the ascension of the conquering king is spoken of as the result of a previous descent to the ‘lower regions of this earth of ours¹.’ No man, as St. John says, hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven. The person who ‘beggared himself’ to come down to our earth and who subsequently mounted into the divine glory is one and the same person, Christ the incarnate Son; and He thus descended and re-ascended in order that He might, through the atonement wrought by Him in the flesh and through the exaltation which rewarded it, restore to the universe that unity of which sin and rebellion had robbed it, and ‘fill all things’ once again with the divine bounty and presence².

¹ I do not think St. Paul need refer to the descent into Hades. ‘The lower parts of the earth,’ Is. xlv. 23, may also refer not to Hades (see Delitzsch *in loco*) but to ‘the earth beneath.’

² The ‘filling all things’ is, in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, the characteristic action of the exalted Christ and the result of the reconciliation and atonement won. Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 24-28, ‘That God may be all in all.’

(2) The sense of the psalm is—possibly not without Jewish precedent¹—altered in expression so that, instead of the conqueror receiving gifts from men, his conquered enemies, we have him represented as ‘giving gifts to men.’ This modification, whether original in St. Paul or accepted by him, is no doubt due to the fact that his mind is full of the idea of Christ as conquering only to bless, receiving homage only to be enabled to bestow on them who offer it the fulness of the divine bounty. And the ‘captives’ of Christ, to St. Paul’s mind, are no doubt not men, but the hosts of Satan reduced to impotence. The exalted Christ, then, is the source of all gifts in His Church, and He bestows on men various endowments in such a way as to maintain among them a necessary relation. ‘No member of the body of Christ is endued with such perfection as to be able, without the assistance of others, to supply his own necessities. A certain proportion is allotted to each, and it is only by communicating with others that all enjoy what is sufficient for maintaining their respective places in the body².’ This is the principle of mutual dependence, the fundamental principle of corporate life. Thus ‘He gave

¹ See Delitzsch’s and Perowne’s notes.

² Calvin, *in loc.*

some as apostles, some prophets,' others in other varying capacities to fulfil varying functions; the principle of the bestowal being the same throughout. Each 'gifted' individual becomes himself a gift to the Church. He is 'gifted' not for his own sake but for the Church's sake—'with a view to the perfecting of the saints,' or 'the complete equipment of the consecrated body,' for the manifold 'work of ministry' entrusted to it; or to look at the matter from a rather different point of view, 'for the purpose of completing the structure of the body of Christ'—that living company of men in whom Christ expresses Himself and through whom He acts upon the world. And that structure is not complete till all together attain what is impossible to any isolated Christian individual, the unity not only of a common faith, but also of a common knowledge of what is revealed in the Son of God; or, in other words, to the full-grown manhood; which, once again, means that complete developement in which the fulness of the Christ—all the complete array of His attributes and qualities—finds harmonious exhibition over again in His people, His body.

But the possibility of this completeness on the part of the Church as a whole, depends on the

stability of the individual members in the common faith. Thus it is Christ's purpose that His members should cease to be as children, stirred up like the waves of the sea, or carried about like feathers, by every wind of false teaching. There is, it must be remembered, a kingdom of deception, an organized attempt to seduce souls, of which wicked men make themselves the instruments. In view of this hostile kingdom of error, the Christians must abide in the truth revealed to them in love, and so grow up into the completed life of Christ. For He is the head, and in Him they are the body. And the body is a unit of many parts fitted and held together in one life by a supply from the head, which circulates through every joint, and for the full and unimpeded communication of which each several limb must do its proper work, so that the whole body may grow into completed life in that mutual coherence which is Christian love.

This prolonged paraphrase may serve to bring out the innumerable points of interest in that rich passage in which St. Paul as it were gives the reins to his imagination and his feelings in order to describe the glory of the unity of the Church.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith,

When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive,
And gave gifts unto men.

(Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some *to be* apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, which is the head, *even* Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in *due* measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

In this great conception of church unity there are several points to which special attention must be given.

i.

The Church is one, first of all, because a common inward life, the Spirit, from a common source, Christ, flows in her veins and makes her to be one body. What is this 'unity of Spirit?' says Chrysostom. 'As in a body it is spirit which holds all together, and makes that to be a unity which consists of different limbs, so it is in the Church. For the Spirit was given for this purpose that He might unify those who differ in race and variety of habits.' This inward life is no doubt, as we shall see, imparted, maintained and perfected through outward means or institutions—baptism, the eucharist, human offices and ministries; but none the less it is the inward life which makes the Church one. So that her unity is like the unity of a family or a race, a unity of blood and life which exists in spite of all outward differences: and not like such a unity as is produced by outward government, as, for example, Armenians, Syrians, Kurds, and Turks make up the unity of the Turkish empire, or Englishmen and Frenchmen the Dominion of

Canada. The unity of the Christian Church is thus a unity which ought to express itself in 'the bond of peace,' but which does not consist in that, any more than the unity of a family consists in the affection and sympathy which yet brothers ought to have one to another. This Pauline idea of church unity—which is the idea also of the New Testament as a whole—constantly finds expression in early Christian writings, but one particular expression of it may be cited. Hilary of Poitiers, in argument with the Arians, is confronted with the position that the phrase 'I and my Father are one' means only one in will, not one in nature, like the phrase used of the Church, 'one heart and soul.' He refutes the argument by urging that, in the latter case also, what is referred to is not a unity of wills but of nature: believers are 'one thing through a new birth into the same (new) nature.' 'Ye are all one,' says St. Paul, 'in Christ Jesus.' 'The apostle teaches that this unity of the faithful comes from the nature of the sacraments . . . What then can concord of minds have to do with a case where men are already made one by being clothed with one Christ through the nature of one baptism?'¹ This passage gives

¹ Hil. *de Trin.* viii. 7-9. The last sentence is condensed.

a striking view of what ultimately constitutes church unity.

It is necessary to call attention to this position because the great Roman church, which occupies so large a space in the whole area of the church, and impresses its ideas so powerfully upon men's imagination, has perverted this idea of church unity by a one-sided emphasis on unity of government. I find a typical modern Roman statement in Dr. Hunter's *Outlines of Dogmatic Theology*¹: 'The Church has a principle of oneness which joins the members together, and distinguishes the society from a mere aggregate of unconnected units. The members are associated in order that, believing the revelation that God has given, and using the means of grace which He has provided, under the direction of the governors who have their authority from Him, they may attain the end of their being, the salvation of their souls. In other words, the unity which the Church must have includes the unity of faith, unity of worship, and unity of government.' Here we have church unity described as an outward association of individuals to attain a certain end by submitting to a common authority in matters of belief and worship. The

¹ Vol. i. p. 317 (Longmans, 1895).

unity of spiritual life which St. Paul and St. Hilary put distinctly first, becomes secondary or subordinate. It is not even specified among the three chief elements of unity. But it makes the greatest possible difference whether you say 'the Church is one because all baptized persons share a common life in Christ, and ought therefore to behave as "one body,"' or 'the Church is one by submitting to a common authority in belief, worship, and government.' The second is the Roman, the first is the apostolic statement.

ii.

Once more, St. Paul's idea of the unity of the Church forbids us to conceive of it as complete in this world. Each particular church with its own organization has a certain relative completeness, but it gains all its meaning and life through fellowship in the body of Christ—the whole society of men who, having Christ for their head, live in the unity of a life derived from Him. The head of the body is out of sight. So also are the members of the body who 'are fallen asleep' but are still 'in Jesus¹.' It is, so to speak—and increasingly as history goes

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 14.

on—only the lower limbs of the body who are on the earth at any particular moment. And they find their centre of unity at no lower point than Christ, the unseen head. This idea is vigorously expressed by St. Augustine¹: ‘Since the whole Church is made up of the head and the body, the head is our Saviour Himself, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, who now, after He has risen from the dead, sits at the right hand of God; but the body is the Church—not this church or that, but the Church scattered over all the world; nor is it that only which exists among men now living; but they also belong to it who were before us and are to be after us to the end of the world. For the whole Church, made up of all the faithful, because all the faithful are members of Christ, has its head situate in the heavens which governs this body: though it is separated from their sight, yet it is bound to them by love.’

Now it is obvious that this Pauline and Augustinian idea of church unity excludes, instead of suggesting, the Roman method of arguing for the papacy from the necessity that a body must have a head. An association of men in this world, such as the Church on earth

¹ *In Ps.* lvi. i.

is—a 'body of men' in this sense—may be governed in any of the various ways in which human societies are governed, not by any means necessarily by a monarch¹. In this sense a body need not have a single head; or it can be ruled by a president in a council of equals. But in St. Paul's sense, the Church as a body must have a head, and that head can be none other than Christ, because, according to his spiritual physiology, from its head the Church receives its continually inflowing life; and because the body is not completely, but only partially, in this world, and the head must be over all the members, and not only over some.

iii.

But if the unity of the Church, as St. Paul expounds it, is before all else a unity of life, it is as well a unity in the truth. It is a unity based on belief in a divine revelation, given in the person of Christ—based on the common confession that Jesus crucified and risen is Christ and Lord². To say that 'Jesus is the Lord' in-

¹ It is one very noticeable feature of the recent Encyclical of Leo XIII on the Unity of the Church ('*satis cognitum*') that it assumes that 'only a despotic monarch can secure to any society unity and strength.'

² Romans x. 9.

volves further—what is implied in this passage of the Epistle to the Ephesians—the confession of the threefold name—the ‘one God and Father,’ the ‘one Lord’ Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the ‘one Spirit’ which is His gift; and there can be no real question that St. Paul’s language constantly involves that the Son and Spirit are with the Father really personal, and really divine, included, so to speak, in the one only eternal Godhead. A creed then is at the basis of the Christian life—a creed which finds its best expression and safeguard in the formulated doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. There is no reason to think that St. Paul, if the situation of the later Church could have been made plain to him, would have shrunk from these dogmatic safeguards of the Church’s central faith.

But if we grant—what cannot really with any show of reason be denied—that the Church is a visible organization based on a certain revealed truth, which must be accepted by its members, and which admits of being formulated in order to be preserved; still this truth may be advanced and defended mainly by one of two methods—that of external regulative authority, or that of appeal to principles, discussion, controversy,

exhortation. And it can hardly be denied that St. Paul prefers the latter. Sharp appeals to authority are indeed to be found in St. Paul¹, but they are very rare. For example, in none of his epistles against the Judaizers is the authority of the apostolic decision, as to what might and what might not be required of the Gentile Christians 'in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia²,' brought into requisition; though that decision 'settled the question.' He prefers to *prove* that 'circumcision is nothing.' This may be in part accounted for by St. Paul's refusal to admit that his own apostolic authority needed the support of the twelve, and by the limited area to which the decision was addressed; but there is another reason as well. For he plainly, as all his epistles show, prefers to appeal not to authority at all but to the spiritual reason; to expound principles, to argue, to awaken the heart, conscience, and mind of Christians. It must be admitted that there is very little in St. Paul's epistles about differences of doctrinal views among Christians as distinct from differences in practices. Yet there is enough—as in the vigorous passage about the 'regarding of one

¹ For example, see Gal. i. 6-9.

² Acts xv. 23-29.

day above another¹—to justify the belief that he would not have viewed with any disapproval the existence in the Church of tolerated differences of opinion where they did not touch the basis of the Church's life. Such differences of view are hardly separable from what St. Paul glories in—a unity which is consistent with great variety of gifts and character, and great freedom. It is unity in variety which he has as his ideal, such a unity as is always characteristic of a unity of life, like that of nature or of a free people; or a unity, again, like that of a great Gothic Church, or of the Bible.

It is quite certain that St. Paul would have deprecated that 'short and easy' method of promoting unity which has constant recourse to the external pressure of dogma and authority.

iv.

It follows naturally from what has been just said, that St. Paul should look not so much to ecclesiastical enactments as to a right Christian temper for preserving outward unity. 'Making it your moral effort,' so we may paraphrase his exhortation to the Asiatic Christians, 'by means

¹ Romans xiv. 5-6; cf. Phil. iii. 15-16.

of the virtues which I have just specified of humility, meekness, long-suffering, and forbearance, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Christian peace.' The New Testament view of heresy (a self-willed separatism), or schism, is that it is a violation of charity and peace in the interests of pride and impatience and self-will. It is men like 'Diotrephes who loveth to have the pre-eminence,' who violate it. In fact it is written in history that the ecclesiastical schisms of the past have been due mainly either to the impatience and wilfulness of would-be reformers, from Tertullian downwards, or to the arrogance and love of domination in rival individuals or rival sees.

'Nothing,' says Chrysostom on this passage, 'will have power to divide the Church so much as the love of authority, and nothing provokes God so much as that the Church should be divided. We may have done ten thousand good actions, but if we rend the fulness of the Church, we shall suffer punishment with those who rent His body.'

From this point of view we may find an interesting parallel to this exhortation of St. Paul in a passage of Plato's *Laws*, which is, I believe, one of the few passages in pre-Christian writings where the virtue of humility is recognized.

‘God, as the old tradition declares, holding in His hand the beginning, middle, and end of all that is, moves according to His nature in a straight line towards the accomplishment of His end. Justice always follows Him, and is the punisher of those who fall short of the divine law. To that law he who would be happy holds fast, and follows it in all humility and order; but he who is lifted up with pride, or money, or honour, or beauty, who has a soul hot with folly and guilt and insolence, and thinks that he has no need of a guide and ruler, but is able himself to be the guide of others, he, I say, is left deserted of God; and being thus deserted, he takes to him others who are like himself, and dances about in wild confusion; and many think that he is a great man, but in a short time he pays a penalty which justice cannot but approve, and is utterly destroyed, and his family and city with him.’

From the point of view of the moral duty of preserving ecclesiastical unity, it is quite clear that the guilt of Christians has been exceedingly great, and also that it has been very widely diffused. The amount of ambition, insolence, and impatience in the Church has, in fact, been so vast that it remains no longer a matter

for astonishment that it should have made the havoc that it has made in the divine household, and should have thwarted, as it has thwarted, the divine intention. But the recognition of this fact lays on us the duty of meditating continually on the divine intention, and by all that lies in our power, by prayer and by every other means, to restore the recognition of the divine principle of unity whether in the narrower or the wider circle of church life.

It is not too much to say that the now popular principle of the free voluntary association of Christians in societies organized to suit varying phases of taste, is destructive of the moral discipline intended for us. It was the obligation to belong to one body which was intended as the restraint on the prejudices and eccentricities of race, classes and individuals. If Greeks, Italians, and Englishmen are to be content to belong to different churches; if among ourselves we are to have one church for the well-to-do, and another for 'labour'; if any individual who is offended in one church is to be free to go off to another where he or she likes the minister better—where does the need come in for the forbearance and long-suffering and humility on which St. Paul

insists as the necessary virtues of the one body? We, Christians but not in one brotherhood, may not be able to agree at present among ourselves as to the proper basis of ecclesiastical unity, but we ought to be able to agree that, somehow or other, Christians are intended by Christ and by the apostle to be one body, and that the wilful violation of outward unity is truly a refusal of the yoke of Christ.

And a great step would have been taken towards rendering the recovery of ecclesiastical unity more easy if those who recognize the obligation of the principle could be brought to perceive that true catholicism really requires a large measure of toleration and a deliberate reasonableness. At present it is not too much to say that the idea of the obligation of ecclesiastical unity is widely associated with an emphasis on ecclesiastical and dogmatic authority such as is utterly alien to the mind of the apostle of catholicism.

V.

In what has been said above we have been attending chiefly to the restraints which St. Paul's idea of church unity appears to set upon what are commonly known as 'ecclesiastical tendencies.'

Now it is time to emphasize the other side of the representation. For without a strongly engrained prejudice, there is not, it seems to the present writer, any possibility of doubting that St. Paul meant by 'the Church' in general, a society visible and organized, represented by a number of visible and organized local societies or churches¹. The Church is in fact ideal in its spiritual character, but not one bit the less an association of human beings, a society with quite definite limits, ties, and obligations. For, to begin with, the 'one baptism' which conveyed the spiritual gift of incorporation into Christ was also the initiation into an actual brotherhood, with its rules of conduct, worship, and belief: 'we were all baptized into one body².' The 'one Spirit' was normally bestowed by the 'laying on of' apostolic 'hands'—that is, the hands of the chief governors of the Christian corporation. This rite followed upon and completed baptism, and its administration had

¹ Cf. Hort, *Ecclesia*, p. 169, who brings out that *all* members of the local churches, better and worse, are regarded as members of the universal Church. 'There is no evidence that St. Paul regarded membership of the universal Church as invisible and exclusively spiritual, and shared by only a limited number of the members of the external Ecclesiae.' See also app. note E, p. 267.

² 1 Cor. xii. 13.

been one of St. Paul's first ministerial acts after he began his preaching at Ephesus¹. Again, 'the breaking of the bread' or eucharist, according to St. Paul's teaching, both nourished the life of Christ in the Church, as being the communion of His body and blood, and also, in the 'one loaf,' symbolized its outward corporate unity².

Thus the bestowal of gifts of grace through outward rites, which belonged to the corporate life of a society, insured that a Christian should be no isolated and independent individual. More than this, the necessary dependence of each individual Christian upon the one organized society is made further evident by the existence of spiritually endowed officers of the society who were as 'the more honourable limbs of the body'—'some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers'—without whom the body would have lacked its divinely-given equipment for ministry and edification. These were not merely more or less gifted or (as we say) talented individuals who undertook particular sorts of work on their own initiative, or by the invitation of any group of Christian individuals. We find that the apostles at least were a definite

¹ Acts xix. 1-7.

² 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

body of men who had received special commission from Christ Himself to govern His Church¹. The Christian 'prophets' were men of special supernatural endowment, to know and declare God's will, and foretell His purposes. They ranked after the apostles in virtue of their prophetic gift². But even they were to be restrained by the exigencies of church order. 'The spirits of the prophets are subject unto the prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.' Next to the prophets, St. Paul specifies the 'evangelists.' They were no doubt, as their name implies, officers engaged with the apostles in the general work of spreading the gospel, that is of founding and organizing churches. Timothy, who is exhorted to 'do the work of an evangelist³,' would probably have ranked amongst them; and if so, Titus and other similar companions and delegates of apostles. At any rate, by whatever name they were called, such men belonged to

¹ See app. note E, p. 269.

² In ii. 20 and iii. 5, 'Apostles and prophets' are spoken of together almost as one class included under one definite article. And of course the apostle Paul remained also, what he is first called, a prophet (Acts xiii. 1). Apostles were also prophets; but not all prophets were apostles. They can be, therefore, grouped apart as they are here (iv. 11).

³ 2 Tim. iv. 5.

the specially 'gifted' class, if we may judge by the case of Timothy. But he, though marked out by prophecy, received his 'gift,' as a church officer, with the laying on of the hands of a whole presbytery, while the hands of the apostle himself were the divine instruments for imparting the gift to him¹. The 'pastors and teachers'—one class of men and not two—are, we may say certainly, identical with the presbyters or 'bishops' as they were called by St. Paul at Ephesus; and these again were men of spiritual endowment, but also local church officers who had received a definite apostolic appointment², and there is no reason to doubt by laying on of hands. Thus the Church, as St. Paul conceives it, is a body differentiated by varieties of spiritual endowments imparted to definite officers, for the fulfilment of functions necessary to the life and development of the whole body. Thus the outward unity of the

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

² Acts xiv. 23. This is interpreted by the phrase (Acts xx. 28) 'The Holy Ghost made you bishops.' Cf. Titus i. 5, 'I left thee . . . to appoint elders in every city. . . . For the bishop must be blameless.' I assume here the *practical* identity of bishops and presbyters, as Acts xx. 28, Tit. i. 5-7, Acts xiv. 23 (with Phil. i. 1) seem to require. But 'the presbyters' or the 'presbyterate' was the more general name for the governing body of a church, and an apostle can therefore call himself a presbyter or include himself in the presbyterate (1 Peter v. 1; 1 Tim. iv. 14), whereas he would hardly call himself a 'bishop.'

society at any particular moment, and the necessary connexion of each individual Christian with it, is secured both by the existence of social sacraments or means of grace, and by the existence of a ministry spiritually endowed and commissioned, to whom individual Christians owed allegiance, and who ranked as the more honourable limbs of that body to which they must belong if they would belong to Christ.

vi.

St. Paul is not here thinking of the unity of the Church otherwise than at a particular moment. But if one turns one's attention to its continuous unity down the ages, again it must be recognized that one main link of unity has been in fact the apostolic succession of the ministry; that is the permanence in the Church of a spiritually-endowed 'stewardship of divine mysteries' received continually by the original method of the laying on of hands in succession from apostolic men. The necessity for each individual Christian to remain in relation to these commissioned stewards if he wishes to continue to be of the divine household, has kept men together in one body. And any one who looks at St. Paul's method of imparting spiritual authority

and office to Timothy and Titus, and directing them in their turn to hand it on by ordaining others, can scarcely doubt that he contemplated the institution in the Church of a permanent ministry deriving its authority from above.

How, in fact, did the later church ministry connect itself with that which we find existing in the apostolic age? The apostolic ministry divides itself broadly into the general and the local. There are 'ministers' or 'stewards' who are officers of the church catholic and have a general commission. Such general commission belonged, of course, to the apostles, though mutual delimitations were arranged among themselves and though St. James, who ranked with the apostles, was settled at Jerusalem. It belonged also, more or less, to 'evangelists' and other 'apostolic men,' who, however, might be temporarily located in particular churches and districts, like Timothy in Ephesus, and Titus in Crete. It belonged also to the prophets, who would have been recognized as men inspired of God in all the churches, and who in the subapostolic age are found in some districts exercising functions like those of the apostles in the first age. The local officers, on the other hand, were the presbyters, who are called also bishops, and the

deacons. With this earliest state of things in our mind, we shall perceive that where an apostle or apostolic man was permanently resident in one particular church, a threefold ministry, like that of later church history already existed. So it was at Jerusalem where the presbyters and deacons were presided over by St. James. So it was in Crete under Titus, and in Ephesus under Timothy. So it was a few decades later in all the churches of Asia as organized by St. John. In other parts of the world the exact method by which the ministry developed is a matter of much dispute. But it seems to the present writer most probable that everywhere the threefold ministry came into existence by (1) a change of arrangement, and (2) a change of name. (1) The change of arrangement was the establishment in each local church of a prophet, or one, like Timothy or Titus, who had been ordained to quasi-apostolic office by an apostle or man of apostolic rank; such a change taking place first at the greatest centres, and then in lesser cities. (2) The change of name was the appropriation to this now localized ruler of the title of bishop or 'overseer' which had hitherto appertained more or less to the presbyters generally.

But in any case it is certain that the development of the ministry occurred on the principle of the apostolic succession. Those who were to be ministers were the elect of the church in which they were to minister: but they were authoritatively ordained to their office from above, and by succession from the apostolic men. And such a principle of ministerial authority appears to be not only historical, but also most rational. For a continuous corporate unity was to be maintained in a society which, as being catholic, must lack all such natural links of connexion as are afforded by a common language or common race. And how could such continuous corporate unity have been so well secured as by a succession of persons whose function should be to maintain a tradition, and whose ministerial authority should make them necessary centres of the unity?

DIVISION II. CHAPTERS IV. 17—VI. 24.

Doctrine and conduct.

HERE the apostle, with a final 'therefore,' resuming the 'therefore' of IV. 1, passes without further delay to the entirely practical portion of the epistle.

These 'therefores' are characteristic of St. Paul. They indicate his deep sense of the vital and necessary connexion between the Christian mode of living and the doctrines of Christian belief. Christian belief is a mould fashioning human conduct by a constant and uniform pressure into a characteristic type, or a set of forces urging it along certain lines of movement. Thus when some point of Christian belief has been expounded there follows a 'therefore' indicating the inevitable moral consequence of such belief where it is intelligently and voluntarily held. Of course the consequence does not follow of mechanical necessity. The doctrine acts by an appeal to the will. 'I beseech you

therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God'—so St. Paul makes his appeal to the Romans, when he had given them his great exposition of the doctrines of grace and justification¹. When he has expounded the doctrine of the resurrection to the Corinthians², he concludes—'*Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast,' &c. The doctrine of the Epistle to the Colossians leads to two conclusions: '*mortify therefore*' and '*put on therefore*, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion³.' The Epistle to the Hebrews contains similar moral appeals based on dogmatic statements. '*Therefore* let us give the more earnest heed.' '*Having therefore*, brethren, boldness by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart.' '*Therefore* let us lay aside every weight⁴.' These '*therefores*,' I say, indicate a fundamental characteristic of Christianity: it is a manner of living based upon a disclosure of divine truth about God and His will, about man's nature and his sin, about God's redemptive action and its methods and intentions.

Among ourselves to-day we hear frequently enough disparaging reference to theological

¹ Rom. xii. 1.

² 1 Cor. xv. 58.

³ Col. iii. 5, 12.

⁴ Heb. ii. 1; x. 19; xii. 1.

doctrine whether as a subject for study or for definite instruction. Theological dogmas are alluded to as things remote from the ordinary concerns of men and associated with the jarring interests of different religious bodies or of their clergy, with 'denominationalism' or 'sacerdotalism'¹. This idea has been due in great measure no doubt to faults in theologians and priests. But it is none the less absurd, when it is seriously considered. If those whose lives have given the most shining examples of practical Christianity in all ages were cross-questioned, it would be found that the overwhelming majority would, in all simplicity, attribute what was good in their life to their definite beliefs. Indeed, it is self evident that it must have a practically vast effect on a man's conduct whether, for instance, he really believes that his own and other men's lives, after some seventy years of probation in this world, pass under divine judgement, only to enter into new and eternal conditions where they will inevitably reap the fruits of their previous careers.

¹ An interesting expression of this sort of feeling is to be found in George Crabbe's poem, *The Library*. On the whole we must have improved since his day in our perception of the connexion of Christian doctrine with Christian practice.

It must make a vital difference whether he believes that the world is the expression of blind force or of the will of a living, loving, God; whether or no he believes that God personally cares for each individual: whether or no he believes that God's interest in the world was such as to move Him to redeem it, by the sacrifice of Himself, from the tyranny of sin: whether he believes in divine forgiveness and God's indwelling by His Spirit: whether he believes in a divine brotherhood and divine means of grace in a household of God in the world. In fact, if the practical ethics of India and China, or the Turkish Empire and Morocco, are considered side by side with those of Christian Europe, it is impossible to resist the conviction that men's behaviour depends in the long run on what they believe about God.

This obvious conclusion is, in part, veiled from our eyes by two facts. One is that logic works slowly in human life. Take a transverse section of humanity at any particular moment, and it appears a mass of inconsistencies. It might almost suggest that there is no connexion at all between belief and practice. But the same appearance is not presented by human life in its long reaches. There you see how, in the

slow result, an alteration of belief involves an alteration of practice. Thus to take an example: at present our social conscience about the obligations of marriage, or about personal purity, or about suicide, unsatisfactory as it may appear to be to an earnest Christian, is still saturated with Christian sentiment which is the result of a prolonged impression left by Christian doctrine. If the doctrine were to pass out of the minds of Englishmen in general, after a generation or two there would be a weakening or destruction of the corresponding sentiment, and an abolition of what is at present an obstacle to the reign of sensual or selfish desires. But it takes some generations for the effect of any weakening of belief to make itself felt.

There is another fact which veils from the eyes of people in general the real connexion between morals and doctrine. It is that it is largely mediate or indirect. The moral standard of the 'average man' is, unconsciously, kept up by the morals of the best men and women. For social opinion is with the majority the force which mainly influences their practice, and social opinion depends largely on leaders. 'It is when the best men cease trying that the world sinks back like lead.' Let anything

happen which should silence the moral effort of the best individuals, and disaster would be imminent. But this is exactly what would be the result if the best men and women were to cease to be Christian believers. It is the highest level of our common life that would be depressed. The result all round would be indirect, but it would be widespread and disastrous.

I do not mean, or think, that this weakening of religious belief in the best men and women is occurring. I only instance its morally certain results to make apparent how the general bearing of religious beliefs on social practice is, in one way, veiled by its indirectness.

But to St. Paul all this is self-evident. He sees quite clearly that Christianity is to be a new life, a new social and ethical manifestation in the world, because Christians believe that God has made plain to them in Jesus Christ His character, nature, and redemptive purposes, and has given, by His Spirit, a practical power to their wills to correspond with the truth revealed to their intelligences and hearts.

So he proceeds from his exposition of the great doctrines of the Church of the Redemption to its practical moral consequences.

DIVISION II. § I. CHAPTER IV. 17-24.

Christianity a new life.

THE characteristic words of St. Paul's gospel—grace, forgiveness, mercy, liberty, justification by faith not by works—may naturally, when taken by themselves and isolated from their context, lead to a false thought of God as morally 'easy going,' and to a corrupt laxity of conduct. Such a result has shown itself within the area of modern history in the antinomianism of some Protestant bodies. But long before the Reformation St. Paul's words were 'wrested by the ignorant and unstedfast to their own destruction¹.' It was probably a misunderstanding of St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith which called forth the protest of St. James' epistle. And indeed the traces of this tendency to pervert the gospel are apparent enough in

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 16.

St. Paul's own epistles. Divine grace, it was even argued, can better show its largeness if we afford it an opportunity by the abundance of our sin. 'Let us continue in sin that grace may abound.' To this monstrous suggestion St. Paul replies, in his epistle to the Romans ¹, that it rests on a complete misconception. Christian faith is an introduction into Christ. Believing we are baptized into Him. This means that we are to live as He lived towards the world of sin and towards God. It means that we surrender ourselves in a spirit of glad obedience to be moulded after His pattern. If our believing does not lead to this new living, beyond all question it is a spurious thing, and none of the Christian privileges attach to it. With a similar purpose St. Paul writes here to the Asiatics—newly-made Christians, who lived in the midst of an appallingly corrupt society, and whose inherited traditions of conduct were altogether lacking in self-restraint—to warn them against possible abuses of their Christian privileges and Christian liberty.

To be a Christian is to be committed to a new life different utterly from the old life.

What was the old life? In writing to the

¹ Rom. vi. 1 ff.

Romans St. Paul describes the life of the contemporary heathen world as having its origin in a refusal of the will to acknowledge God. 'They glorified Him not as God.' 'They refused to have God in their knowledge.' Hence a darkening of the understanding. 'They became vain in their reasonings; their senseless hearts were darkened; professing themselves to be wise they became fools.' This explains the origin and possibility of so foolish a worship as that of men and beasts. Further, with the obscuring of the intelligence there was a perversion and emancipation of the passions, resulting in all forms of lawlessness and unnatural vice. A similar description of the 'old life' St. Paul gives here. The root of evil here also appears to be in the 'heart' (or will)—'the hardening of the heart'; hence arises 'vanity of the mind,' an aimlessness or loss of all true and fixed point of view, a 'darkening of the understanding,' an inherent 'ignorance'; and accompanying this loss of real intelligence has been a loss of what is the true goal of human life, fellowship in 'the life of God.' Instead of that a life of uncleanness has prevailed, made into a regular business¹, and pursued with 'greediness,' i. e. an entire disregard

¹ 'To work all uncleanness.' Marg. 'to make a trade of.'

for others' rights—such a life as is only possible where all true human feeling and good taste has been quenched. Men have become 'past feeling.'

As regards the relation of this black picture to the actual facts, enough has perhaps been said above. At least St. Paul's picture is given as a direct challenge to the experience of those to whom he writes; and it is not blacker, at any rate, than the picture given by a philosophic contemporary at Ephesus, who calls himself Heracleitus. And on the black background of this 'former manner of life,' this 'old man' or old manhood—a life ruled by lusts which are not only morally evil but deceive and mock those who yield to them, leading, in fact, to nothing but corruption and death, a 'waxing corrupt after the lusts of deceit'—St. Paul sketches in the new life in Christ. To become a believer is to submit one's intelligence to learn a new lesson, to study Christ; it is to yield one's self to a 'form of teaching'¹ in order to have one's life re-fashioned in marked contrast to old and abandoned ways of life; it is to imbibe a new principle in the heart of one's rational being, 'to be renewed in the spirit of one's mind'; it is to put on deliberately, as a man puts on clothing,

¹ Rom. vi. 17.

a new manhood, Christ's manhood, which is 'according to God¹,' that is, is based on His own life, and is His 'new creation' in righteousness and holiness. And this righteousness and holiness can never deceive us by false promises, because they are rooted in 'truth' or reality.

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

There is one phrase in this passage which may need some further comment—'The life of God.' Into God's own eternal life, as He lives it in Himself, we are given but glimpses. But God is also living in the world as its inherent life, and each form of creation participates in its measure, even if unconsciously, in the life

¹ Eph. iv. 24, R. V. Marg. 'the new man which is after God, created,' &c.

of God. Consciously and intelligently man was intended to participate in it, but he 'alienated' himself from it by sin; and, while he was physically sustained in life by God, morally and mentally he was an exile. But Christ embodies the divine life anew in human form, and by His Spirit imparts it as a new life to men. Once more in Christ men live both 'in God' and 'according to God.'

This thought of our relation to the life of God is, in part, expressed in the Latin original of the Collect for the ninth Sunday after Trinity, in which we pray 'that we who cannot exist without Thee, may be enabled to live according to Thee.'

DIVISION II. § 2. CHAPTER IV. 25-32.

The new life a corporate life.

THE first characteristic of the new life dwelt upon is its corporate character, as a life lived by those who are 'members one of another,' and have therefore a common aim. In a body of people working with a common aim there may be a healthy rivalry and competition in doing good work, a manifold spirit of initiation and inventiveness, and there may be rewards of labour, proportioned not merely to needs but to these personal excellences. But what there cannot be is a competition which runs to the point of mutual destructiveness, or such accumulation of the fruits of skill and labour in a few hands as maims or starves the life of the majority. The common interest prevents this. 'The members must have the same care one of another,' so that 'when one member suffers all the members suffer with it¹.' The life is the life

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.

of a body, and the general well-being is therefore the common interest of all the members, for the weakening or decay of one is the weakening and decay of a more or less valuable part of a connected life. This is the general principle on which the Church is based. This is the moral meaning of churchmanship. 'Ye are members one of another.'

Various specific obligations follow from this general principle.

(a) *Truthfulness and openness*; for falsehood and concealment belong to a life of separated and conflicting interests. The prophetic ideal for the restored Israel is to be realized among Christians. 'Speak ye every man truth with his neighbour: execute the judgement of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour: and love no false oath¹.'

(b) *Self-restraint in temper*. We must not injure one another in life and limb, or wound one another in feelings. Therefore we must watch the first beginnings of anger, as the Psalmist² warns us, lest they lead to sin and give

¹ Zech. viii. 16, 17.

² Ps. iv. 4, according to the LXX. But the English version 'Stand in awe and sin not' is probably correct.

the devil, i. e. the slanderer of his brethren, the inspirer of all mutual recriminations, room and scope to work in.

(c) *Labour for the purpose of mutual beneficence.* Under the old covenant God had contented Himself with forbidding stealing. Under the new covenant the prohibition of what is wrong passes into the injunction of what is right. Labour of whatever kind, labour directed to produce something good, is required of all. 'If any man will not work, neither let him eat¹.' The idle man in fact violates the fundamental conditions of the Christian covenant as truly as if he were denying the rudiments of the Christian faith. Now the object of labouring is to acquire 'property,' which is in one sense 'private,' and in another sense is not. The labourer may have, under his own free administration, the fruits of his labour, but he is to administer his property with the motive, not only of supporting himself, but of helping his weaker and more needy brethren.

(d) *Profitable speech.* Here again the Christian is not to be content with avoiding noxious conversation. His talk is to be, not indeed 'edifying' in the narrowest sense, but such as

¹ 2 Thess. iii. 10.

'builds up what is lacking' in life, or supplies a need, whether by counselling, or informing, or refreshing, or cheering; so that it may 'give grace¹,' that is, afford pleasure and, in the widest sense, bring a blessing to the hearers.

In all their conduct Christians are to have two masterful thoughts. (1) They are to think of the divine purpose of the Holy Ghost who has entered into the Church to 'seal' or mark it as an elect body destined for full redemption from all evil, in body and soul, at the climax of God's dealings, the last day. The Holy Ghost, with all His personal love, will be grieved if we thwart His rich purpose for the whole body by anything which is contrary to brotherhood in the thoughts of our hearts, or the words of our lips, or our outward conduct.

(2) They are to remember the divine pattern of life. God has shown His own heart to us in the free forgiveness which He has given us in Christ. Being in constant receipt of that forgiveness, we must not prove ourselves hard and unforgiving towards one another.

¹ Cf. Col. iv. 6: 'Let your speech be always with grace' or 'graciousness'; Luke iv. 22: 'gracious words'; Ps. xlv. 2: 'Grace is poured into thy lips'; Eccles. x. 12: 'The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious'; Eccles. xxi. 16: 'Grace shall be found in the lips of the wise.'

Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need. Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.

Here, then, St. Paul sketches catholicity in practice. The very idea of the Church is that of a fellowship of naturally unlike individuals, harmonized into unity by the new 'truth and grace' of God, which has been made theirs in their regenerate life. It is this endowment of the regenerate life that is to enable them to transcend, and overstep, and defeat natural incompatibilities of temper, and to be one body in Christ. The practical meaning of catholicity is brotherhood. It is love, as St. Augustine says, grown as wide as the world¹.

Why has the world lost this sense of the

¹ See app. note F, p. 271, *The Ethics of Catholicism*.

moral meaning of catholic churchmanship? Why has 'ecclesiastical' come to mean something quite different to 'brotherly'? Or it is a more profitable question to ask, How shall we make it mean the same thing again? There are many who would give up the very effort after recovering the church principle, the obligation of the 'one body.' But this, as has been said, is to abandon the ultimate catholic principle of Christianity. For the very purpose of the one church for all the men of faith in Jesus, is that the necessity for belonging to one body—a necessity grounded on divine appointment—shall force together into a unity men of all sorts and different kinds; and the forces of the new life which they share in common are to overcome their natural repugnance and antipathies, and to make the forbearance and love and mutual helpfulness which corporate life requires, if not easy, at least possible for them.

This is the principle which must not be abandoned. We must assert the theological principle of the Church because it is that and that alone which can impress on men practically the obligation and possibility of a catholic brotherhood.

But it is folly to assert the theological truth of

churchmanship, and neglect its moral meaning. Quite recently the bishops of the Lambeth Conference have striven to impress anew the ethics of churchmanship upon the conscience of the faithful¹. The principle of brotherhood must act as a constant counterpoise to the instinct of competition. The principle of labour shows that the idle and selfish are 'out of place' in a Christian community. The principle of justice forces us to recognize that the true interest of each member of the body politic must be consulted. The principle of public responsibility reminds us that each one is his brother's keeper. Once more the Church has been aroused to its prophetic task of 'binding' and 'loosing' the consciences of men in regard specially to those matters which concern the corporate life and the relations of classes to one another. And we pray God that the work of our bishops may not be in vain. What we want is not more Christians, but, much rather, better Christians—that is to say, Christians who have more perception of what the moral effort required for membership in the catholic brotherhood really is.

¹ See *Report of Lambeth Conference*, 1897. S. P. C. K., pp. 136 ff. ; and app. note G, p. 274.

No doubt the needed social reformation is of vast difficulty. For instance, one who contemplates our commercial relations in the world may indeed be tempted to despair of the possibility of recovering the practical application to 'business' of the law of truthfulness; and many a one who is practically engaged in commerce, in higher or lower station, finds that to act upon the law may involve something like martyrdom. But the very meaning of divine faith is that we do, in spite of all discouragements, hold that to be practicable which is the will of God; and it is nothing new in the history of Christianity if at a crisis we need 'the blood of martyrs'—or something morally equivalent to their blood—for 'a seed,' the seed of a fresh growth of Christian corporate life. No fresh start worth making is possible without personal sacrifices; and to recover anything resembling St. Paul's ethical standard for Christian society we need indeed a fresh start. But the few Tractarians of sixty years ago by industry, patience and prayer effected a kind of revolution in the Church as a whole; and reformers of Christian social relations may with the same weapons—and with no other—do the like.

DIVISION II. § 3. CHAPTER V. I-14.

*The Christian life an imitation of God and
a life in the light.*

ST. PAUL has just suggested the thought of imitating God by ready forgiveness. And in fact here—in the imitation of God—is one of the greatest of the new ideas and motives which Christianity supplies. God has manifested Himself in Christ under human conditions. He has translated the unimaginable Godhead into terms of our own well-known human nature. For Christ is very man, yet He is the Son of God, truly God, and His character is God's character. For the Christian henceforth in a quite new sense God is imitable: He can become a pattern for actual human life. As children partly consciously and partly unconsciously imitate their parents, so we Christians as 'beloved children' are to 'become imitators of God.'

And it is quite plain what the character of

God as manifested in Christ is. It is love; and to imitate God is therefore to 'walk in love,' that is, to conduct one's life with love as its conscious motive and atmosphere. Moreover, the love of Christ is a love which shows itself in self-sacrifice. 'He offered himself as an offering and sacrifice to God on our behalf'; and God, who had of old made it plain by His prophets that He could find no satisfaction in animal victims, accepted 'as a sweet savour' this free-will offering of self-sacrificing love. In the self-sacrifice of Christ, therefore, we have the clear disclosure both of what God is and of what God will accept from man.

But this ideal of life as lying in love and in the deliberate self-sacrifice of one for another is the plain negation of some maxims for life generally accepted in heathen society. It is the plain negation of sensual self-indulgence at the expense of others, or at the expense of our spiritual nature, of 'fornication and uncleanness of all kinds,' of filthy conduct, of the sort of jesting or wit which ignores all moral restraints. It is the plain negation again of selfish greed or the unlimited desire to get—'covetousness.' These things are out of the question for a body of saints, that is, men dedicated to a holy God.

The tone and language which befits such a dedicated life is the tone and language of thanksgiving. But clearly Asiatic Christians were only too ready to forget the essential incompatibility of their new profession with the old sinful habits around them. So St. Paul emphasizes 'This ye know for certain that fornication or unclean living on the one hand, or the turning of gain into a god on the other, surely excludes a man from the kingdom of Christ and God ¹.' And he reiterates 'let no man deceive you with empty words.' Such vices, being in plain contradiction to the divine will, make men subjects of the divine wrath, and for you this should be startlingly plain. You have been brought out of the realm of darkness of which once you formed a part, into the realm of light, of which you now form a part, the realm whose light is Christ. There is no fellowship between the light and the darkness ². To live in the light means to bring forth fruit of goodness and righteousness and truth, the fruit of a character like Christ's. For you have in Christ a definite standard by which you can test what is well pleasing to the

¹ Possibly this expression means 'the kingdom of Him who is at once Christ and God.'

² 2 Cor. vi. 14.

Lord. It is your business, therefore, to keep yourselves altogether separate from the works of darkness which bear no fruit. Not only so, but it is your business to 'reprove' or convict the dark world of sin ; not, of course, by making the works of darkness the subjects of your curiosity and conversation—that indeed must not be—but simply by the contrast which your own lives present. In the light of your lives the secret shame of the heathen life will be unmasked. And in being unmasked even the works of darkness will themselves become part of the light. To make such ways of living attractive they must be cloaked up in a deceitful glamour. Once stripped bare and shown in their true character they teach their true lesson. Thus, the one duty of a man is to awake from the old sleep of death ; to separate himself from the morally dead world and stand clear in the light of Christ. And that is what the early Christian hymn, which St. Paul cites, was continually impressing upon the Christian conscience. We may attempt to reproduce it in something like its original rhythm thus :—

'Be awakened, thou that sleepest ;
Rise alive from out the dead world ;
Christ, the Light, shall shine upon thee.'

Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children ; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints ; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting : but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no man deceive you with empty words : for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them ; for ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord : walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord ; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them ; for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of. But all things when they are reproved are made manifest by the light : for everything that is made manifest is light. Wherefore *he* saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.

Three points may be noticed in this characteristic exhortation :—

1. The strife of light and darkness. The victory of the rising sun and its surrender at evening to the darkness ; the obscuring of the light through eclipse or mist and its recovery—

these universal appearances present themselves naturally to human consciences everywhere as being experiences analogous to the moral strife within between good and evil. Light is thus the universal symbol of good, and darkness of evil. The symbolism passes out of early native myths into the spiritual phraseology of many religions; but especially into those of the Persians and the Jews. 'In thy light shall we see light' is the cry of the devout heart towards God. And the whole of Christian language is possessed by the symbolism. Christ is 'the light of the world': His disciples are 'the children of light,' they are to be clothed in 'the armour of light,' bathed in 'the light of the glorious Gospel': they are the children of the God who 'dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto': who 'is light and in whom is no darkness at all.'

St. Paul, like St. John, specially loves the metaphor of light. And it is somewhat startling to notice how different is his conception of enlightenment from that common in modern times, or indeed, from that held in the schools of philosophy of his own day or by the Gnostics just after him. This latter class of men, who can be taken as typical of many others at very

different epochs, meant by 'the enlightened' a select few who had a special capacity for intellectual abstraction and contemplation, and who by such qualities of the intellect were believed to attain to a knowledge of God which was beyond the reach of the ordinary men of faith. But St. Paul, following his Master, is quite certain that the root of true enlightenment lies in the will and heart. The love of the light is first of all simply the pure desire for goodness; and anything that is not this first of all is a counterfeit and a sham. And the true enlightenment is thus not the privilege of a few, but is open to all who will come to Christ. 'Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure, through the foolishness of the preaching, to save them that believe.' 'If any man thinketh that he is wise among you in this world, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God¹.' This language sounds violent; but I doubt if many thinking men could now be found

¹ 1 Cor. i. 20, 21; iii. 18.

to doubt that the way opened by the 'foolishness of the gospel preaching' was a way of light for the world compared to which the way of the contemporary philosophers was darkness and delusion. The arrogant wisdom of the contemporary 'Heracleitus' would have provided no real light at all for the Ephesians whom he denounced. A fresh start was wanted for man, and the fresh start was primarily in the life of the conscience and heart. On the other hand neither St. Paul, nor any of the New Testament writers, can be accused of the sort of obscurantism to which the later Church has often fallen a victim. One cannot even conceive St. Paul denouncing free inquiry, or cloaking up from free investigation the title-deeds of Christianity. His love of the light—even with all the dangers that the light has—like his love of freedom, is frank and real.

If we come down to our own time, there is no doubt a great deal of contemporary 'enlightenment' that St. Paul would have pronounced spurious. He would never surely have disparaged intellectual inquiry or free scientific research: but he would have continually emphasized that no one was really enlightened whose will and heart was not right with God.

To have a scientific knowledge of facts is by comparison superficial; and worse than superficial is the sharpness and worldly cleverness which continually boasts of being 'wide awake' and 'up to date.' It is possible to be awake and enlightened in the speculative and practical intelligence: to be awake and enlightened in the region of the senses: and yet to be asleep and in the dark in the region of the will and conscience towards God. And there lies the true heart of manhood. It is possible even to be enlightened about evil and in the dark as regards goodness. But St. Paul hates curiosity about the ways and methods of sin. 'I would,' he says, 'have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil ¹.' Take heed that the light that is in thee be not darkness. This curiosity about sin is a delusion which has sometimes a strange hold on some who would serve God. But they must recognize that the only Christian method of 'convicting the world of sin' is by 'convicting it of righteousness.' Innocence has a power which sometimes is strangely underrated.

We may pause for a moment longer to dwell on the beauty of St. Paul's ideal of Christianity

¹ Rom. xvi. 19.

as a life in the light. It has everything to gain and nothing to lose by disclosure. It has no need to cloak itself. It can be frank with itself and the world. And, on the other hand, sin is a great fraud and delusion as well as a great disobedience. It dwells in a region of lies and excuses and concealments; it hides from itself and from the world its true character and true issues. For, in fact, it is not only in itself foul and rebellious, but it is in its issues fruitless. It leads to nothing: it produces nothing: it tends only to decay or corruption of mind and body, while goodness is only another term for life and fruitfulness. Life, and the production of life, is the good, and it belongs to the light; on the contrary, what hinders or destroys life goes against God and belongs to the darkness. This is a judgement which mis-called disciples of Malthus in our day would do well to remember. It is not from too much life that the world is suffering, but from corrupt and perverted life. What we want to secure is not a limit to the population, but the bringing up of children in health and simple living, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

2. St. Paul, in some passages of his epistles, uses very strongly 'universalist' phrases. He

has spoken to the Ephesians of bringing all things in heaven and earth again into a divine unity in Christ. And to the Corinthians he spoke of a time when God should be 'all things in all.' It is, therefore, all the more noticeable that when he comes to speak of the destiny of evil men he does not offer them any hope if they persist in their evil, but warns them that moral evil utterly and wholly excludes from the kingdom of God: and he appears to be not at all anxious to reconcile this warning as to the eternal consequences of wilful evil with what he has said in other connexions as to the final inclusion of all things in a great unity. His example would teach us to aim at being true to the whole truth rather than at attaining a premature completeness or consistency of knowledge about a world in regard to which we only 'know in part.' 'Yea, the more part of God's works are hid¹.'

3. We cannot fail to notice how constantly St. Paul associates lawless lust with lawless grasping at money or the goods of other men—greediness or avarice. This has led some to suppose that the Greek word for greediness is really intended to mean lust in its grasping

¹ Eccclus. xvi. 21.

character. But this is a mistake. The words are associated partly, no doubt, because lust so often involves an 'overreaching and wronging our brothers¹' of their just rights; but much more because the lawless grasping after gain and the lawless grasping after pleasure are the two great perversions of the human soul. Pleasure and mammon are the two typical idols.

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 6.

DIVISION II. § 4. CHAPTER V. 15-21.

The Christian life a zealous and deliberate seizing of the opportunity afforded by surrounding moral evils.

THE Christian stands awake and in the light. He has a vantage-ground of spiritual knowledge, and the opportunity afforded by this vantage-ground he is to use. He is not to live at random but is to fashion his life with deliberate circumspection and prudence in order to make the best of the spiritual opportunity, just as the merchant cleverly seizes and uses to his own advantage a particular commercial situation. What gives the Christian his spiritual opportunity is the corruption which surrounds him. Of that corruption St. Paul has already said enough. The result of it was to leave whatever was good in man disconsolate and ill at ease. The exhibition of the Christian light amidst such surroundings could not but arrest men's attention and attract

their hearts. And if we want to be informed, in greater detail, how to buy up the opportunity, St. Paul's answer is threefold.

First, there must be a positive apprehension of the divine will in particular cases such as qualifies for decisive action. 'Be not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.' This is the sort of wisdom which enables a man to do what our Lord expects of spiritual leaders, to 'discern the time.' It is a rare quality but, according to the measure of the gift of Christ to each, it is attained by spiritual thoughtfulness, singlemindedness, and prayer.

Secondly, there is to be a strong and sociable enthusiasm, expressing itself in uninterrupted joy, and based upon deep draughts of the divine Spirit. In St. Paul's day, as in our own, men would seek escape from the dullness of life and its sense of isolation in the excitement and fellowship which comes of intoxicating drink. Other forms of mental intoxication were provided at Ephesus by a sensual religious enthusiasm. St. Paul would have the Christians confront such lawless excitement not merely with the spectacle of discipline and self-restraint, but also with a counter-enthusiasm, purer but not less strong. Christians are to find an ex-

citement as strong as drunkenness, and a fellowship as warm as is to be found in any band of revellers, in deep draughts of the wine of the Holy Ghost. 'Be not drunken with wine wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking one to another in psalms¹ and hymns and spiritual songs (such as the one he has just quoted), singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord.'

Lastly, there is to be a spirit of submission, mutual accommodation and order. The disciples are to 'subject themselves one to another in the fear of Christ.' They are, as St. Peter says², to be girt each one with the apron of service to minister to one another's needs, knowing their responsibility to Christ, and how He looks for obedience and service in all men. Enthusiasm is apt to be lawless, but the enthusiasm of the Christians is to be the enthusiasm of an organized body. It was said of old of the men of Issachar, who gathered round the standard of David³, that they had 'understanding of the times to know what Israel ought

¹ St. Paul is in part referring to the habit of responsive or antiphonal chanting, which Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, reports as characteristic of the Christians half a century later—'to sing responsively (*secum invicem*) a hymn to Christ as a God.'

² 1 Pet. v. 5.

³ 1 Chron. xii. 32.

to do; the heads of them were two hundred, and all their brethren were at their commandment.' A similar spirit of practical religious understanding, with a similar readiness to obey their leaders, is what St. Paul desires in the new Israel to do the work of the true Son of David.

A temper then of clear positive understanding as to what God wills to be done in the immediate future, fired by an ardent and sociable enthusiasm, and associated with a disinterested readiness to obey one another in practical affairs—this is what St. Paul means by 'looking carefully how we walk'; and it is worth while noticing that St. Paul's conception of carefulness leads in a direction quite opposed to mere timorous and negative prudence. Exhortations not to be rash, but to 'look before you leap,' are very commonly given by the wise. But it does not seem to be generally remembered that, at least in the service of God, most men err by excess not of rashness but of caution, and 'look' so long that they never 'leap.' Truly if rashness has slain its thousands, irresolution has slain its ten thousands. The spirit St. Paul would have us cultivate is not this cowardly mis-called wisdom, but rather the spirit of the ideal soldier, of the 'happy warrior.' Nothing,

in fact, could be more fascinating than the picture St. Paul here draws of the Christian community. He has a vision of a pure brotherly enthusiastic society, fulfilled with a divine life, and attracting into its warm and comfortable fellowship the isolated, weary, hopeless, and sin-stained from the cold dark world outside.

Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.

St. Paul's exhortation to 'buy up the opportunity because the days are evil' finds fresh application in every generation. For each generation the 'days are evil,' and good men always feel them to be so. Not necessarily that they are evil by comparison with other days, for the 'good old times' certainly never existed, and it is not often possible to balance the evils of one age against those of another. It is enough

for us to understand 'the ills we have.' What they are in our own generation is conspicuous enough. In part they are the normal evils of selfishness, and sensuality, and pride, and weakness; of divisions of races and classes, and personal uncharity. In part they are special: I will not make any general attempt to characterize them here. But it is probably true to say that, among other characteristics which our generation exhibits, is a lack of great enthusiasms and strong convictions and inspiring leaders. Literature, philosophy, and politics are alike lacking in a clear moral impulse. 'Causes' are at a discount. Men are disillusionized. It is a 'fin de siècle' by some better title than a chronological mistake. It is this characteristic of the moment that ought to give the Church its opportunity. At present she largely fails to take it because she lacks concentration within her own body. The true disciples, the faithful remnant, exist in every place, but they are lost in the crowd. They need to be drawn together if they are to make an impression. A vigorous faith, and the confident hope for humanity which a vigorous faith begets, were never better calculated than they are to-day to produce a right moral impression on the world, owing to the

mere absence of rival enthusiasms. We can supply what is wanted if only everywhere we will cultivate sincerity and enthusiasm rather than numbers, and aim at forming strong centres of spiritual life, rather than a weak uniform diffusion of it.

DIVISION II. § 5. CHAPTERS V. 22-VI. 9.

The relation of husbands and wives: parents and children: masters and servants.

ST. PAUL mentions submission as required, in a sense, from all Christians towards all others—‘submitting yourselves one to another.’ But it is plain that in any community, and most of all in a Christian community where order is a divine principle, some will be specially ‘under authority’: and accordingly St. Paul applies his general maxim to three classes in particular—wives towards their husbands, children towards their parents, slaves towards their masters. But in making these applications of the law of obedience, he enlarges his subject by including the counter-balancing principle of the duty of self-sacrificing love on the part of those in authority; so that he treats not one side of the relation only but both.

A. HUSBANDS AND WIVES. (V. 22-33.)

Wives are to be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. Just as the divine fatherhood is the ground of all lower fatherhood, so the authority of the one great Head is the ground in all lower headships, and each in its place is to be accepted as the shadow of His. Thus the husband's headship over his wife is the shadow of Christ's headship over the church, and that explains of what sort the husband's authority should be. For Christ's rule is a rule for the advantage of the ruled. He rules the church as Himself its saviour or deliverer from bondage, and the word 'saviour' is full of associations of self-sacrificing love. So must it be with a Christian husband. But Christ is not merely a head to the church. He too is a husband. This idea of God as the husband of His people—an idea which expressed both His choice of them, His love for them, and His jealous claim upon them—is familiar in the Old Testament. 'Thy Maker is thy husband.' 'I am a husband unto you, saith the Lord¹.' And it is probable, as Dr. Cheyne suggests, 'that the so-called Song of Solomon was admitted into the canon

¹ Is. liv. 5; Jer. iii. 14.

on the ground that the bride of the poem symbolized the chosen people¹. But in a Christian sense the idea gains a fresh meaning. 'We that are joined unto the Lord are of one spirit' with Him². We are the 'members of his body'; and, as drawing our life from His manhood, we may be even said to be, like Eve from Adam, 'of his flesh and of his bones³.' Christ then is, in this richness of meaning, the husband of the church.

St. Paul seems further to describe this relation of Christ to the church under the figure of three marriage customs. The husband first acquires the object of his affection as his bride by a dowry: then by a bath of purification the bride is prepared for the husband: finally she is presented to him in bridal beauty. Accordingly Christ, because He loved the church, first 'gave himself for her'; and we may interpret this phrase in the light of another used by St. Paul in his speech to the Ephesian elders, where the church is spoken of as 'purchased' or

¹ *Prophecies of Isaiah*, vol. ii, p. 188.

² 1 Cor. vi. 17.

³ This, it is well known, was read in the Old Version. It has vanished (in submission to the verdict of the best MSS.) from the R. V. But there seems to me to be some force in Alford's plea for the originality of the words, as they stand in 'Western' and later texts.

‘acquired’¹ by Christ’s blood. Having thus acquired the Church for His bride, He secondly ‘cleansed her in the laver’² of water with the word’: and that, in order that He might ‘sanctify her’ and so finally ‘present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.’

This threefold statement has great theological interest which we will consider shortly. Here we will simply let it stand, as St. Paul uses it, to exhibit Christ as the ideal husband, the pattern for every husband. Love for his bride; self-sacrifice in order to win her; and the deliberate aiming at moral perfection for her through the bridal union—that is the law for him. The wife, according to the original divine principle, is to be part of the man’s self—one flesh with him. He must love her truly and care for her as his own flesh. This ‘mystery,’ or divine secret revealed, is great, St. Paul says; ‘but in saying this I am thinking of Christ and his church.’ This seems to be the exact force of verse 32. In other words—this divine disclosure of the relation of God to man, as realized in the marriage of Christ and His church, is indeed great and lofty.

¹ Acts xx. 28.

² ‘Washing.’ Marg. ‘laver.’

But, St. Paul continues in effect, great and lofty as it is, it is a practical pattern for us. Do ye also, as Christ the church, severally love each one his own wife even as himself, and let the wife see that she fear (i. e. reverence and fear to displease) her husband, even as the church stands in holy awe of Christ.

Wives, *be in subjection* unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, *being* himself the saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives also *be* to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious *church*, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church; because we are members of his body. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh. This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church. Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself; and *let* the wife *see* that she fear her husband.

There are several points here which need consideration.

1. There is a rich theology in St. Paul's brief description of the relation of Christ to the church. First, there is Christ's love for the church which involves a purpose of entire sanctification for her; then there is sacrifice, the sacrifice of Himself, for her; then there is the baptismal purification of the church to fit her for Christ, which is in fact nothing else than the baptismal purification of all the individual members of the Christian body; and this is also, as St. Paul elsewhere teaches, the means to them of new life by union with Himself. It is their cleansing bath because therein they are 'baptized into Christ.' (Here, we notice, the analogy of the marriage custom breaks down: what is in the marriage ceremonies only a washing preparatory to union, is in the spiritual counterpart also the act of union. Baptism is both the abandonment of the old and union with the new.) Lastly, there is the final presentation by Christ of the church to Himself in sinless, stainless perfection.

We observe that Christ's sacrifice is regarded by St. Paul as preparatory and relative. He bought the church by the sacrifice of Himself to obtain unimpeded rights over her, because He loved her and in order to make her morally

perfect. The atonement has its value because it is the removal of the obstacles to Christ working His positive moral work in her.

We observe again that the sacrifice of Christ is spoken of as offered for the church, not for the world. Christ does indeed 'will that all men shall be saved': He did indeed 'take away,' or take up and expiate, 'the sin of the world' in its totality¹. But the divine method is that men shall attain their salvation as 'members of Christ's body.' Thus, if Christ's ultimate object in the divine sacrifice is the world: His immediate object is the church through which He acts upon the world and into which He calls every man. 'I pray,' He said, 'not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me.' 'He gave himself for us that he might redeem us . . . and purify unto himself a people for his own possession².'

Once more we notice in this passage a significant hint as to St. Paul's conception of baptism. There is no doubt of the spiritual efficacy which he assigns to it. And we observe in germ a doctrine of 'matter' and 'form' in connexion with the sacraments. Baptism is a 'washing of water' accompanied by a 'word.' The word

¹ John i. 29.

² John xvii. 9; Tit. ii. 14.

or utterance which St. Paul refers to may be the formula of baptism 'into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,' or the 'word of faith' of which confession is made by the person to be baptized—the confession that 'Jesus is the Lord'¹; but in either case the word gives the rational interpretation to the act. It sets apart what would be otherwise like any other act of washing, and stamps it for a spiritual and holy purpose. 'Take away the word, and what is the water but mere water? The word is superadded to the natural element and it becomes a sacrament.' So says St. Augustine², in the spirit of St. Paul. This is what is meant by the later theological term 'form'³, the 'form' being that which differentiates or determines shapeless 'matter' and makes it have a certain significance or gives it a certain character. Thus the form of a sacrament is the word of divine appointment which gives it spiritual significance; and the form and matter together are essential to its validity. The matter of baptism is the washing by water: the form is the defining phrase 'I

¹ Rom. x. 9; cp. Acts xxii. 16.

² *In Joan. tract.* 80. Cf. Irenaeus *c. haer.* v. 2, 3.

³ See St. Thom. Aq., *Summa*, Pars iii. Qu. lxx. art. 6 *ad* 2.

baptize (or wash) thee into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'

Lastly, we notice that the spiritual union of Christ and His church, though it is perfect in the divine intention from the first, is in fact only consummated at the point where the church is freed from the imperfection of sin and has become the stainless counterpart of Christ Himself. The love of Christ—the removal of obstacles to His love by atoning sacrifice—the act of spiritual purification—the gradual sanctification—the consummated union in glory: these are the moments of the divine process of redemption, viewed from the side of Christ, which St. Paul specifies.

2. We come back to St. Paul's conception of marriage to dissipate misconceptions. It is indeed absurd to speak as if St. Paul were, in this passage, mainly emphasizing the subjection of the woman, whether this be done from the conservative side 'to keep women in their place': or from the point of view of those who desire her emancipation, in order to represent St. Paul, and so Christianity as a whole, as giving to women a servile position. Over against the subjection of women, he sets, and indeed gives more space to emphasize, the self-sacrifice

and service which is due to her from the man. You cannot tear the one from the other. Like St. Peter so St. Paul would have the husband 'give honour to the wife—as to the weaker vessel' indeed, but also as 'joint heir of the grace of life¹.' In essential spiritual value men and women are equal. 'In Christ is neither male nor female.' St. Chrysostom rightly bases on this passage a powerful appeal to husbands to overcome their selfishness in their relation to their wives. There is nothing servile in the subordination required of the woman². If 'the husband is the head of the wife, the head of the husband is Christ, and the head of Christ is God.' Christ even is subordinate. And the character of the headship of the husband

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 7.

² It is noticeable that St. Paul does not (according to the Revised Version which represents the original) exactly enjoin *obedience* upon wives (as upon children and slaves) but *subjection*: cf. Col. iii. 18; 1 Cor. xiv. 34; 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12; 1 Pet. iii. 1. If however in the use of the 'obey' in the vow of the wife our marriage service goes an almost imperceptible stage beyond St. Paul, its general tone preserves St. Paul's balance admirably. The husband 'worships' the wife and endows her with all his worldly goods. The only other ecclesiastical formula of ours in which the word worship is used of a purely human relation, is the peer's oath of allegiance to the sovereign at the coronation, 'I do become your liegeman of life and limb and of earthly worship: and faith and troth I will bear unto you to live and to die against all manner of folks.'

altogether excludes the idea that women are to be married in order to serve men's selfish interests or gratify their passions.

Then we must notice that St. Paul is impressing upon us a moral ideal of which the two parts are inseparable. St. Paul says nothing to indicate that where the relations are not ideal—where the husband is selfish or brutal—law should not step in to protect the interests of the wife and secure her against the insults or cruelties or frauds of the husband. He is expressing a moral ideal¹; while law must be largely content with preventing outrage and securing a background on which ideals can become possible. And just as St. Paul tells Christians that they are to obey magistrates as God's ministers—leaving it to be understood that when they command what is contrary to God's will, 'we ought to obey God rather than men'; so in the same way he speaks of the wife's (or child's or slave's) duty of subjection, leaving a similar reservation likewise to be tacitly understood. Obedience is to be 'in the Lord.'

3. But no doubt St. Paul does emphasize the subordination of women to men. He will

¹ How many husbands are capable of 'teaching their wives at home' about religion? see 1 Cor. xiv. 35.

not *ordinarily*¹ permit the woman 'to teach (in the public assembly) nor to have dominion over a man².' He clearly does not think the difference of male and female is merely physical, but perceives that the characteristic moral perils of the sexes³ are different: he assigns to man the governing and authoritative position, and to woman the more retired and 'quieter'⁴ functions. It may indeed be argued that in certain details St. Paul's injunctions are for his time only, and no more of perpetual obligation than his prohibition of second marriages to the clergy is assumed to be, or his quasi-recognition of slavery. But this argument carries us but a little way. The most of what St. Paul says of men and women is based on a principle which he conceives to be divine, and which all history and experience confirms. The position of women in Christendom has often fallen far short of what is truly Christian: but no attempted rectification will be found otherwise than disastrous which ignores the fundamental principle. All through the animal kingdom mental differences accompany the physiological difference between the sexes. Experience teaches

¹ See however below, p. 225.

² 1 Tim. ii. 12; 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

³ 1 Tim. ii. 8, 9.

⁴ 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12; cf. 1 Pet. iii. 4.

that women, as a whole, are superior to men in certain moral qualities—in self-sacrifice, sympathy, purity, and compassion, and in religious feeling, reverence and devotion: but inferior to them in the moral qualities which are concerned with government—in justice, love of truth and judgement, in stability and reasonableness. Intellectually women have very often greater quickness of apprehension and memory, greater power in learning languages, greater artistic sensibility. But they are conspicuously inferior in the constructive imagination, in creative genius, in philosophy and science. It is sometimes said that if women had been as well educated as men—and assuredly on Christian principles they ought to be, if differently, yet equally well educated—they would have created as much. Why, then, have almost no women been poets of the first order, or musical composers, or painters? For in these artistic walks of life their education has been in many countries better and more continuous. To maintain that men and women are only physiologically different is to run one's head against the brick wall of fact and science, no less than against St. Paul's and St. Peter's principles¹.

¹ All this has been admirably stated by George Romanes, whom no one could accuse of misogyny, in his essay on 'the mental

It remains true that

‘women is not undeveloped man
But diverse . . . seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal¹.’

4. It is necessary to add something about the position assigned by St. Paul, in other epistles, to unmarried women; and to notice the relation of his ‘theory of women’ to earlier Jewish ideas and those current in general society.

Nothing could well exceed the influence or nobility of the position of the Jewish wife and mistress of the household, as it is given, for example, in the Book of Proverbs². That position St. Paul can perpetuate and deepen, but hardly augment. And the Old Testament recognized an altogether exceptional position in certain women endowed with the gift of prophecy, like Miriam and Deborah and Huldah, who in virtue of their gift exercised a public and

differences between men and women.’ See *Essays* (Longmans, 1897), pp. 113 ff. And the statements of the text are supported by Mr. Havelock Ellis’ *Man and Woman* (Contemp. Science Series). Mr. Ellis is sometimes less decisive than Mr. Romanes. But see capp. xiii, xiv.

¹ Tennyson’s *Princess*; cp. his *Memoir* by Hallam Tennyson, (Macmillan, 1897), i. 249.

² Prov. xxxi. 10 ff.

quasi-political ministry. Thus in the Christian community also there were prophetesses, and St. Paul, in the same epistle in which he forbids women in general to teach in public, seems to leave room for such exceptional women to 'pray or prophecy' in the Christian congregation with their heads covered¹. Thus in fact all down Christian history there have been at intervals exceptional women with unmistakable gifts for guiding souls in private and directing public policy, like St. Catherine of Siena, or with gifts of government like St. Hilda, whom the Church has rightly accepted as divinely endowed. Where Christianity appears to have made a fresh departure in regard to women was in the organized consecration of the gift of female ministry. The deaconesses like Phoebe, and women like Lydia and Priscilla, are most characteristic Christian figures; and they have a long line of successors in later deaconesses and 'widows,' and sisters of mercy, and nurses and teachers. It was the ignominy of the Church of England that for so long she narrowed down the functions of women to those which belong to wives and daughters at home. Multitudes of

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 5.

women need other than domestic spheres and are happier away from home ; and we may thank God that—apart from the specially political and judicial functions which are proper to men—the widest sphere of influence and service is now again being thrown open to women.

How pitiable it was that, in face of all Christian experience and of the authoritative language of the New Testament, unmarried women should have no prospect opened to them but such as was drearily summed up in the phrase ‘old maids.’ St. Paul, if in this epistle he is glorifying the married state, certainly also glorifies both for men and women the freedom of the celibate life consecrated to the service of God—the consecration of those who in a special sense are the virgin-brides of Christ. We may be thankful indeed that now, if somewhat tardily, it has received from the largest assembly of Anglican bishops ever gathered together an altogether ungrudging recognition¹.

It has been very frequently observed that, especially in Asia Minor, women in St. Paul’s day were attaining in non-Christian society positions of great influence and dignity. We find them

¹ *Lambeth Conference, 1897. Report on Religious Communities*, pp. 57 ff.

very commonly holding priesthoods and public offices and magistracies. It would appear, however, that too much may be made of this. The populations of the Asiatic towns loved to be entertained with expensive games and largesses of money and grain, and to have temples built and endowed for them. Wealthy women of noble families were elected to priesthoods and offices where they could exercise their acceptable liberality in these ways. But the offices were rather of dignity than of practical government, and were closely associated with priest-hoods. There is no evidence that women in Asiatic cities could assist at assemblies, or give votes, or speak in public, or serve on legations, or enter into political relations with the Roman authorities. There were women among the Asiarchs, but probably only when they were associated in an honorary manner with their husbands. In the early Christian church the influence of women was put to far nobler uses than in Asiatic cities ; but their position relatively to men was not far different from what would have been recognized in the general society of that region¹. In other parts of the empire the

¹ See Paris, *Quatenus foeminae res publicas in Asia Minore Romanis imperantibus attigerint* (Paris, 1891).

women of the Christian church were conspicuously in advance of those outside.

In somewhat later days of the Church there was some resentment at the high and free position assigned to women in the New Testament documents. Thus one celebrated MS. of the New Testament¹—the Codex Bezae—changes ‘not a few of the honourable Greek women and of men’ (Acts xvii. 12) into ‘of the Greeks and the honourable, many men and women.’ In xvii. 34 it cuts out Damaris. And in xvii. 4 it changes the ‘leading women’ into ‘wives of the leading men.’ The spirit which prompted these changes in an early Christian scribe and reviser, has not been wanting in much later ages, though it had not a chance of tampering with our sacred texts.

B. PARENTS AND CHILDREN. VI. 1-4.

After laying down the principles which determined the relation of wives to their husbands, St. Paul turns to the relation of children to their parents. The wives are to be *subordinate* to their husbands. Children are to be *obedient* to their parents as part of their duty ‘in the

¹ Ramsay, *Paul the Traveller*, p. 268.

Lord,' as members of His body. They are to show honour to their parents as directed by the commandment which we call the fifth, but which St. Paul here probably calls 'a commandment standing first accompanied with promise.' It stands first among those which refer to our neighbour grouped apart—as our Lord also says 'Thou knowest the commandments,' and then specifies those six alone¹. And it is accompanied with a promise implied in the words 'that it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live long in the land'²—a promise that the prosperity and permanence of the nation shall be bound up with the observance of the natural law of obedience to those from whom we derive our life. I say the prosperity of the nation, and so no doubt secondly of the individual; but all through the Ten Commandments the individual is regarded only as part of the nation.

The other translation of these words—'which is the first commandment with promise'—is one to which the original Greek does not seem to give any preference, and which does not give a good sense, for the fifth commandment has neither

¹ Mark x. 19; cf. Matt. xix. 18, 19; Luke xviii. 20.

² Cited from Exod. xx. 12 according to the LXX, which assimilates the passage to Deut. v. 16.

more nor less of promise than the second, and in what we now call 'the second table' it stands alone as having a promise implied.

Here again in dealing with children St. Paul passes from the duty of the subject to that of the authority. Fathers are exhorted not to irritate their children, as in the Epistle to the Colossians they are not to provoke them, or, as the word may perhaps mean, overstimulate them so as to lead to their losing heart¹. A broken spirit and a sullen spirit are alike bad signs in youth. But this does not mean that they are not to be disciplined; discipline is God's purpose for us all through life, and in childhood and youth parents are the ministers of God to discipline their children and put them in mind to obey God.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

We may notice in this passage the implication of infant baptism. The children are addressed 'in the Lord,' that is as already members of the

¹ Col. iii. 21. In 2 Cor. ix. 2, the only other place where the word is used by St. Paul or in the New Testament, it means to *stimulate by emulation*.

body of Christ. The children of any one Christian parent are, in 1 Cor. vii. 14, described as 'holy'—that is consecrated or dedicated by the circumstances of their birth and the opportunity which it supplies for Christian education—and thus fit subjects for baptism. In fact it is probable that Christianity took from the Jews the practice of infant baptism. Within their own race indeed there was no need of a ceremony of incorporation. For the son of Jewish parents was *born* a member of the chosen people. But a proselyte was—certainly before our Lord's time—made a Jew with a *baptism*¹ which was regarded as his new birth, his naturalization into a new and higher race. And if the proselyte had children they were baptized with him as 'little proselytes².' With a new depth of meaning this practice of infant baptism was taken over by the Christian church in the case of those already dedicated to God by the spiritual opportunities of their birth and education, so that the beginnings of growth might be sanctified, like our Lord's childhood, in the Spirit.

¹ Accompanied with circumcision and sacrifice.

² See Dr. Taylor, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, pp. 55-58, and Sabatier, *La Didachè*, pp. 84-88, both very suggestive passages. Cf. Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus*, App. xii, and Schürer, *Jewish People*, Div. ii. vol. ii. pp. 319 ff.

We must also take to heart in our day the lesson of the fifth commandment, as re-enforced by St. Paul, with its converse in the duty of parents. Domestic obedience is somewhat at a discount, it is to be feared, in this generation in most classes of society; and this is a very grave peril. Parents, wealthy as well as poor, are very commonly disposed to make schoolmasters and schoolmistresses do the work of discipline for them, while they retain for themselves the privilege of spoiling their children. There are, however, of course, very many exceptions. There are multitudes of homes where discipline is exercised wisely and lovingly, and children find obedience always a duty and mostly a joy. This is certainly the only divinely appointed method by which we are to be prepared for the obedience and self-discipline required of us when we grow to be what is falsely described as 'our own masters.' And St. Paul's twofold admonition to parents is full of wisdom: they are not to provoke their children so that they become bad-tempered, and they are not to over-stimulate them, by competition or otherwise, so that they become disheartened. But to nourish them by appropriate food, mental and spiritual as well as physical, so that they may grow to the full

stature and strength which God intends for them.

C. MASTERS AND SLAVES. VI. 5-9.

St. Paul's method in dealing with slavery is well known. The slave is in a position really, at bottom, inconsistent with human individuality and liberty, as Christianity insists upon it. Thus, to go no further, the male slave and his wife are liable (in all systems of slavery) to be sold apart from one another. This puts in its plainest form the inconsistency of slavery with Christianity. The slave is a living rational tool of another man, and not his brother with fundamentally the same spiritual right to 'save his life' or make the best of his faculties. Thus where a slave *can* obtain liberty St. Paul exhorts him to prefer it¹. And when he is dealing with the Christian master Philemon, whose runaway slave, Onesimus, has become Christian under St. Paul's influence, he exhorts him to receive him back, no longer as a slave, but as a brother beloved². But Christianity enlisted in no premature crusade against slavery as an institution—premature, because Christianity was not yet in the position to fashion a civilization of

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 21, 23.

² Philem. 16.

her own. It left it to be undermined by the Christian spirit.

Thus St. Paul exhorts slaves to obey, and that in more forcible language than he has applied even to children, 'with fear and trembling'; that is with an intense anxiety to do their duty. They are to perform their work as in God's sight, thoroughly—He being the inspector of it who can infallibly tell good work from bad—and 'from the heart,' that is, putting their will and mind into it. They are to do it as to the Lord, knowing that no good work, however menial or uninteresting, is wasted, but shall be received back, in its product or legitimate fruit, as 'its own reward' from Christ's hand. In the Epistle to Timothy, this additional reason for diligent service is given, that if Christian slaves get a reputation for slackness they will bring discredit upon the Christian name¹. And in the same passage a touch is added which shows what, even in its possible perversions, the spirit of brotherhood really meant, 'They that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren; but let them serve them the rather, because they that partake of the benefit are believers and beloved.'

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 1.

And the masters are exhorted to remember that true principle of human equality—that ‘with God is no respect of persons,’ that in God’s sight each man counts for one, and no one counts for more than one; each having an equal claim and duty in the sight of the one Master under whom all are servants. Thus they are to deal with their slaves in the same spirit of duty as their slaves should have toward them, and they are to treat them with the respect due to brother men ‘forbearing threatenings.’

Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.

Christianity has long abolished slavery so far as the legal status of the slave is concerned. But the principles of mastership and service are still to be learned in this brief section of St Paul’s writing; and if we really believed that ‘with

God is no respect of persons' there would be neither scamping of work and defrauding of employers, nor on the other hand the 'sweating' of the employed and treating of men and women as if they were tools for the profit of others, instead of spiritual beings, with each his own divine end to realize.

DIVISION II. § 6. CHAPTER VI. 10-20.

The personal spiritual struggle.

THE ethics of Christianity are, as has appeared, social ethics, the ethics of a society organized in mutual relationships: and Christianity is concerned with the whole life of man, body as well as soul, his commerce and his politics as well as his religion. But because this requires to be made emphatic, does it follow that we are to neglect or depreciate the inward, personal, spiritual struggle? Are we to give a reduced, because we give a better balanced, importance to 'saving one's own soul,' that is preserving or recovering into its full power and supremacy one's own spiritual personality? Of course not: because social health depends on personal character. The more a good man throws himself into social, including ecclesiastical, duties the more he feels the need of character in himself and others. And the more serious a man is

about his character, the more deeply he feels the attention and self-discipline that character needs. Certainly the most ascetic words of our Lord—those in which He speaks of the necessity for cutting off or plucking out hand or eye if hand or eye cause us to stumble, and warns us that we must be strong at the spiritual centre of our being, before we can be free in exterior action—are likely to come home to no one with more force than to one who would do his duty in Church or state. Christ cannot redeem the world without Himself passing through the temptation and the agony in the garden. And thus St. Paul, after he has been dwelling on the fraternal and corporate character of the Christian life, comes back at the last to emphasize the personal spiritual struggle. To be a good member of the body, he says in effect, you must be in personal character a strong man, strong enough in Christ's might to win the victory in a fearful struggle.

Against what is our spiritual struggle? It is against the weakness and lawlessness of our own flesh. 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' 'Our eye and hand and foot cause us to stumble.' Or again it is the world which is too much for us. 'We seek honour one of another

and not the glory that cometh from the only God.' Quite true. But behind the manifest disorder of our nature and the insistence of worldly motives there are other less apparent forces; and these, in St. Paul's mind, so overshadow the more visible and tangible ones that, in the Biblical manner of speech, he denies for the moment the reality of the latter. 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood,' not against our own flesh or a visibly corrupt public, but against an unseen spiritual host organized for evil.

It was noticed above that St. Paul has no doubt at all that moral evil has its origin and spring in the dark background behind human nature—in the rebel wills of devils. It has become customary to regard belief in devils or angels as fanciful and perhaps superstitious. Now no doubt theological and popular fancy has intruded itself into the things it has not seen, and, instead of the studiously vague¹ language of St. Paul, has developed a sort of geography and ethnology for spirits good and bad which is mythological and allied to superstition. But it has acted in the same way, and shown the same resentment of the discipline of ignorance, in the case of even more central spiritual realities. No

¹ Col. i. 16.

doubt again the belief in the devil has sometimes become, in practical force, belief in a rival God. But this sort of Manichaeism or dualism represents a very permanent tendency in the untrained religious instincts of men, which the Bible is occupied in restraining. In the Bible certainly Satan and his hosts are rebel angels and not rival Gods. Once more undoubtedly demonology has been a source of much misery and many degrading practices. But demonology represents a natural religious instinct. It is older than the Bible. And what our religion has done, where it has been true to itself, is to purge away the noxious and non-moral superstitions. St. Paul is representative of true Christianity in his stern refusal to use the services of contemporary soothsaying and magic and sorcery¹. One has only to compare the exorcisms of our Lord with contemporary Jewish exorcism to note the moral difference. And every truth has its exaggeration and its abuse. The question still remains ; are there no spiritual beings but men ? Is there no moral evil, but in the human heart ? Our Lord gives the most emphatic negative answer. His teaching about evil (and good) spirits is unmistakable and

¹ Acts xiii. 6-12 ; xvi. 16-18 ; xix. 13-20.

constant. If He is an absolutely trustworthy teacher in the spiritual concerns of life, then temptation from evil spirits is a reality, and a reality to be held constantly in view. And our Lord's authority is confirmed by our own experiences. Sometimes experience irresistibly suggests to us the presence of unseen bad companions who can make vivid suggestions to our minds. Or we are impressed like St. Paul with the delusive, lying character of evil, which makes the belief in a malevolent will almost inevitable. Or the continuity in evil influences, social or personal, seems to disclose to us an organized plan or 'method¹,' a kingdom of evil.

It is then in view of unseen but personal spiritual adversaries organized against us as armies, under leaders who have at their control wide-reaching social forces of evil, and who intrude themselves into the highest spiritual regions 'the heavenly places' to which in their own nature they belong, that St. Paul would have us equip ourselves for fighting in 'the armour of light².'

If there is a spiritual battle, armour defensive and offensive becomes a natural metaphor which

¹ This is akin to St. Paul's word in the Greek, iv. 14 ; vi. 11.

² Rom. xiii. 12.

St. Paul frequently uses¹. But in his imprisonment he must have become specially habituated to the armour of Roman soldiers, and here, as it were, he makes a spiritual meditation on the pieces of the 'panoply' which were continually under his observation.

We are, then, to 'take up' or 'put on' the panoply or whole armour of God. This means more than the armour which God supplies. It is probably like 'the righteousness of God,' something which is not only a gift of God, but a gift of His own self. Our righteousness is Christ, and He is our armour. Christ, the 'stronger man,' who overthrew 'the strong man armed' in His own person², and 'took away from him his panoply in which he trusted,' is to be our defence. And by no external protection; we are to clothe ourselves in His nature, to put Him on as our armour. His is the strength in which we are, like Him, to come triumphant through the hour of darkness.

Now the parts of the armour, the elements of Christ's unconquerable moral strength, what are they?

¹ Rom. vi. 13; xiii. 12; 2 Cor. vi. 7; x. 4; 1 Thess. v. 8. Cf. Isa. xi. 4, 5, and Wisd. v. 19.

² Luke xi. 21, 22.

The belt which keeps all else in its place is for the Christian, truth—that is, singleness of eye or perfect sincerity—the pure and simple desire of the light. ‘Unless the vessel be clean (or *sincere*),’ said the old Roman proverb, ‘whatever you put into it turns sour.’ A lack of sincerity at the heart of the spiritual life will destroy it all. Then the breastplate which covers vital organs is, for the Christian, righteousness—the specific righteousness of Christ, St. Paul seems to imply¹, in which in its indivisible unity he is to enwrap himself. And, as the feet of the soldier must be well shod not only for protection but also to facilitate free movement on all sorts of ground, the Christian too is to be so possessed with the good tidings of peace that he is ‘prepared’ to move and act under all circumstances—all hesitations, and delays, and uncertainties which hinder movement gone—his feet shod with the preparedness which belongs to those who have peace at the heart. (‘How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace.’) In these three fundamental dispositions—single-mindedness, whole-hearted follow-

¹ By the use of the articles. Contrast Is. lix. 17 which he is quoting.

ing of Christ, readiness such as belongs to a believer in the good tidings—lies the Christian's strength. But the armour is not yet complete.

The attacks of the enemy upon the thoughts will be frequent and fiery. A constant and rapid action of the will will be necessary to protect ourselves from evil suggestions lest they obtain a lodgement. And the method of self-protection is to look continually and deliberately out of ourselves up to Christ—to appeal to Him, to invoke His name, to draw upon His strength by acts of our will. Thus faith, continually at every fresh assault looking instinctively to Christ and drawing upon His help, is to be our shield, off which the enemy's darts will glance harmless, their hurtful fire quenched. And in thus defending ourselves we must have continually in mind that God has delivered man by a great redemption¹. It is the sense of this great salvation, the conviction of each Christian that he is among those who have been saved and are tasting this salvation, which is to cover his head from attack like a helmet². And God's

¹ Isa. lix. 17.

² 'Salvation' is sometimes viewed as already accomplished, i. e. in the victory of Christ: sometimes as still to be realized at 'the redemption of our bodies': so in 1 Thess. v. 8 the helmet is 'the hope of salvation' yet to be attained.

word—God's specific and particular utterances, through inspired prophets and psalmists—is to equip his mouth with a sword of power; as in His temptation and on the cross, Christ 'put off from Himself the principalities and powers, and made a show of them, triumphing over them openly' by the words of Holy Scripture; as Bunyan's Christian, when 'Apollyon was fetching him his last blow, nimbly stretched out his hand and caught' for his 'sword' the word of Micah, 'when I fall I shall arise.' This is one fruit of constant meditation on the words of Holy Scripture, that they recur to our minds when we most need them. And then St. Paul passes from metaphor to simple speech, and for the last weapon bids the Christians use 'always' that most powerful of all spiritual weapons for themselves and others, 'prayer and supplication' of all kinds and 'in all seasons.' But it is not to be ignorant and blind prayer; it is to be prayer 'in the spirit,' 'who helpeth our infirmities, for we know not of ourselves how to pray as we ought.' 'The things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God'¹; and it is to be the sort of prayer about which trouble is taken, and which is persevering; and it is to be

¹ Rom. viii. 26; 1 Cor. ii. 11.

prayer for others as well as for themselves, 'for all the saints.' And St. Paul uses the pastor's privilege, and asks for himself the support of his converts' prayers, that he may have both power of speech and courage to proclaim the good tidings of the divine secret disclosed, for which he is already suffering as a prisoner.

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Wherefore take up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace ; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil *one*. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God : with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains ; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

St. Paul does not only exhort Christians to pray, but he gives them abundant examples. In this epistle there are two specimens¹ of prayer for the spiritual progress of his converts, mingled with thanksgivings and praise. We habitually pray for others that they may be delivered from temporal evils, or that they may be converted from flagrant sin or unbelief. But surely we very seldom pray rich prayers, like those of St. Paul's, for others' progress in spiritual apprehension.

¹ Eph. i. 15 ff.; iii. 14 ff.

CONCLUSION. CHAPTER VI. 21-24.

But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things : whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness.

TYCHICUS was a native of Asia Minor¹, a companion and delegate of St. Paul, like Timothy and others². He was entrusted with the task presumably of conveying this letter to the churches of Asia Minor, and certainly of informing them as to the apostle's state in his Roman imprisonment—information which could not fail to comfort and encourage them.

St. Paul brings this wonderful letter to a conclusion with a brief benediction to the brethren—an invocation upon them of divine peace, and love with faith—an invocation of divine favour upon all that 'love our Lord Jesus Christ in

¹ Acts xx. 4.

² 2 Tim. iv. 12.

uncorruptness.' Corruption is the fruit of sin, the condition of the 'old man'¹. Incorruption is the state of the risen Christ, and in Him the members of His body are to be preserved, and at last raised 'in corruptible'² in body. But there is a prior 'in corruptibleness' of spirit in which all Christians are to live from the first³, a freedom from all such doublemindedness or uncleanness as can corrupt the central life of the man. And to love Christ with this incorruptibility is the condition of the permanent enjoyment of all that His good favour would bestow upon us.

¹ Eph. iv. 22.

² 1 Cor. xv. 52.

³ 1 Pet. iii. 4.

APPENDED NOTES.



NOTE A. See p. 26.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE RECOGNIZED BY CHRISTIAN
WRITERS AS A DIVINE PREPARATION FOR
THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

(1) The Spanish poet Prudentius (*c.* A. D. 400) fully appreciates the influence of the Roman Empire in welding together the world into a unity of government, laws, language, customs, and religious rites, to prepare the way for the universal Church. The stanzas are remarkable and worth quoting. They are put as a prayer into the mouth of the Roman deacon Laurence during his martyrdom. He recognizes what the Roman Empire has done, and prays that Rome may follow the example of the rest of the world in becoming Christian.

O Christe, numen unicum
O splendor, O virtus Patris,
O factor orbis et poli,
atque auctor horum moenium!

ut discrepantum gentium
mores et observantiam,
linguas et ingenia et sacra,
unis domares legibus.

Qui sceptrâ Romæ in vertice
rerum locasti, sanciens
mundum quirinali togæ
servire et armis cedere:

En omne sub regnum Remi
mortale concessit genus:
idem loquuntur dissoni
ritus, id ipsum sentiunt.

Hoc destinatum, quo magis
ius Christiani nominis
quodcunque terrarum iacet
uno illigaret vinculo.

Da, Christe, Romanis tuis
sit Christiana ut civitas :
per quam dedisti ut caeteris
mens una sacrorum foret.

Confoederantur omnia
hinc inde membra in sym-
bolum :
mansuescit orbis subditus :
mansuescat et summum caput.

Peristephanon, ii. 413 ff.

(2) The Pope, Leo the Great (c. A. D. 450), speaks thus (*Serm.* lxxxii. 2) : 'That the result of this unspeakable grace (the Incarnation) might be spread abroad throughout the world, God's providence made ready the Roman Empire, whose growth has reached so far that the whole multitude of nations have been brought into neighbourhood and connexion. For it particularly suited the divinely planned work that many kingdoms should be leagued together in one empire, so that the universal preaching might make its way quickly through nations already united under the government of one state. And yet that state, in ignorance of the author of its aggrandisement, though it ruled almost all races, was enthralled by the errors of them all ; and seemed to itself to have received a great religion, because it had rejected no falsehood. And for this very reason its emancipation through Christ was the more wondrous that it had been so fast bound by Satan.' Leo further recognizes that the Popes are entering into the position of the Caesars (c. 1), that Rome, 'made the head of the world by being the holy see of blessed Peter, should rule more widely by means of the divine religion than of earthly sovereignty.' But his statement of the relation of Peter to Paul in the evangelization of the world (c. 5) is remarkably unhistorical.

NOTE B. See p. 29.

THE (SO-CALLED) 'LETTERS OF HERACLEITUS.'

Nine letters under the name of the great philosopher of Ephesus remain to us. In one of them (iv) Heracleitus is represented as saying to some Ephesian adversaries, 'If you had been able to live again by a new birth 500 years hence, you would have discovered Heracleitus yet alive [i.e. in the memory of men] but not so much as a trace of your name.' This probably indicates that the author is writing 500 years after Heracleitus' supposed age. His age was differently estimated. But '500 years after Heracleitus' would mean, according to all reckonings, about the first half of the first century A.D. All the other indications of age in the letters agree with this. (See Jacob Bernays' *Heracлитischen Briefe*, Berlin, 1869, p. 112.) They were written presumably at Ephesus, and all or most of them by a Stoic philosopher. I do not think that it is necessary to assume traces of Jewish influence in these letters, any more than in the writings of Seneca. And the bulk of the letters is so thoroughly Stoic and contrary to Jewish feeling, that a Jew is hardly likely to have interpolated them. They illustrate therefore the current philosophic ideas which were at work in the world in which St. Paul lived and taught, when he was outside Judaea. That St. Paul was familiar with these ideas, however his familiarity may have been gained, is shown beyond possibility of mistake by his speeches—supposing them substantially genuine—at Lystra and Athens.

The following passages in these letters are interesting :

(1) (From Heracleitus' defence of himself against

a charge of impiety in letter iv) 'Where is God? Is he shut up in the temples? You forsooth are pious who set up the God in a dark place. A man takes it for an insult if he is said to be "made of stone": and is God truly described as "born of the rocks"? Ignorant men, do ye not know that God is not fashioned with hands, nor can you make him a sufficient pedestal, nor shut him into one enclosure, but the whole world is his temple, decorated with animals and planets and stars? I inscribed my altar "to Heracles the Ephesian" [ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙ ΤΩΙ ΕΦΕΣΙΩΙ] making the God your citizen, not—he continues—to myself "Heracleitus an Ephesian" [the same letters differently divided], as I am accused of doing by you in your ignorance. Yet Heracles was a man deified by his goodness and noble deeds; and were his virtues and labours greater than mine? I have conquered money and ambition: I have mastered fear and flattery,' &c. Then after a passage about the certainty of his own immortal renown, he returns to ridicule idolatry. 'If an altar of a god be not set up, is there no god? or if an altar be set up to what is not a god, is it a god—so that stones become the evidences (witnesses) of Gods? Nay it is his works which shall bear witness to God, as the sun, the day and night, the seasons, the whole fruitful earth, and the circle of the moon, his work and witness in the heavens.' The whole of this letter (iv), which can be paralleled in all its ideas from Stoic and Platonic sources, may compare and contrast with Acts xiv. 15-18; xvii. 22-29.

(2) Letter v is written by Heracleitus in sickness. He gives a theory of disease as an excess of some element in the body; and describes his soul as a divine thing reproducing in his body the healing activity of God in the world as a whole,—'imitating God' by knowledge of the method of nature. Even if his body prove unmanageable and succumb to fate, yet his soul will rise

to heaven and 'I shall have my citizenship (πολιτεύσομαι) not among men but among Gods.' 'Perhaps my soul is giving prophetic intimation of its release even now from its prison house' so short lived and worthless. Letter vi is a continuation of v, containing a denunciation of contemporary medicine on the ground of its lack of science, and a further explanation of the Stoic doctrine of the immanence of God in all nature—forming, ordering, dissolving, transforming, healing everywhere. 'Him will I imitate in myself and dismiss all others.' We should compare and (even more) contrast St. Paul's assertions of independence of bodily circumstances; his belief in the higher sense of 'nature' (Rom. ii. 14), and such phrases as Phil. ii. 20, 'our citizenship is in heaven,' Eph. v. 1, 'Be ye imitators of God.'

(3) Letter vii is addressed to Hermodorus in exile. Heracleitus is to be exiled also 'for misanthropy and refusal to smile' by a law directed against him alone. After an interesting condemnation of *privilegia*, the letter explains his misanthropy. He does not hate men, but their vices. The law should run 'If any man hates vice let him leave the city.' Then he will go willingly. In fact he is already an exile while in the city, for he cannot share its vices. Then he describes Ephesian life in terms of fierce contempt, their lusts natural and unnatural, their frauds, their wars of words, their legal contentiousness, their faithlessness and perjuries, their robberies of temples. He denounces their vices in connexion with the worship of Cybele (beating the kettle-drum) and Dionysus (the eating of live flesh), and with religious vigils and banquets, and alludes to details of sensuality associated with these meetings. He condemns the submission of great principles to the verdicts of the crowd at their theatres, and passes to a further vivid onslaught on their quarrels and murders (they are no longer men

but beasts), on their use of music to excite their bloodthirsty passions, and on war altogether as contrary to 'the law of nature,' and involving the pursuit of all sorts of vice. All this impeachment may be compared with St. Paul, who speaks however by comparison with marked reserve, in Rom. i. 24-31, Eph. iv. 17-19, and elsewhere.

(4) The eighth letter is again written to Hermodorus now on his way to Italy to assist the Decemvirs with the Ten Tables. It contains a somewhat remarkable 'judgement on wealthy Ephesus' and statement of the judicial function of wealth. 'God does not punish by taking wealth away, but rather gives it to the wicked, that through having opportunity to sin they may be convicted, and by the very abundance of their resources may exhibit their corruption on a wider stage.' Cf. 1 Tim. vi. 9.

(5) The banishment of Hermodorus had been on account of a proposed law to grant equal citizenship to freed men, and the right of public office to their children. This instance of Ephesian intolerance gives occasion for an enunciation of the Stoic doctrine that the only real freedom is moral freedom, and moral freedom constitutes a man a citizen of the world. 'The good Ephesian is a citizen of the world. For this is the common home of all, and its law is no written document but God (οὐ γράμμα ἀλλὰ θεός), and he who transgresses his duty shall be impious; or rather he will not dare to transgress, for he will not escape justice.' 'Let the Ephesians cease to be the sort of men they are, and they will love all men in an equality of virtue.' 'Virtue, not the chance of birth, makes men equal.' 'Only vice enslaves, only virtue liberates.' For men to enslave their fellow men is to fall below the beasts; so also to mutilate them as the Ephesians do their Megabyzi—the eunuch-priests of the wooden image of Artemis. There must be inequality of function in the world, but not refusal of fellowship, as the

higher parts of nature do not despise the lower, or the soul think scorn to dwell with the body, or the head despise the entrails, or God refuse to give the gifts of nature, such as the light of the sun, to all equally. Here again we have what is both like and unlike St. Paul's doctrine of true human liberty and 'fellowship in the body.'

On the whole I think these letters are worth more notice than they have received, both in themselves and as a good example of the sort of religious and moral doctrine current in the better heathen circles of the Asiatic cities, while St. Paul was teaching. It presents many points of connexion with St. Paul's teaching, and co-operated with the influence of the Jewish synagogue to prepare men's minds for it. But perhaps what chiefly strikes us is the contrast which the fierce and arrogant contempt of the Stoic presents to the loving hopefulness of the Christian messenger of the gospel.

NOTE C. See p. 74.

THE JEWISH DOCTRINE OF WORKS IN *THE APOCALYPSE OF BARUCH*.

Mr. R. H. Charles gives us the following statement¹:—

'The Talmudic doctrine of works may be shortly summarized as follows: Every good work—whether the fulfilment of a command or an act of mercy—established a certain degree of merit with God, while every evil work entailed a corresponding demerit. A man's position with God depended on the relation existing between his merits and demerits, and his salvation on the preponderance of the former over the latter. The relation between his

¹ *The Apoc. of Baruch* (A. and C. Black, 1896), p. lxxxii. The statement is compiled from Weber, *Lehre des Talmuds*.

merits and demerits was determined daily by the weighing of his deeds. But as the results of such judgements were necessarily unknown, there could not fail to be much uneasiness; and, to allay this, the doctrine of the vicarious righteousness of the patriarchs and saints of Israel was developed not later than the beginning of the Christian era (cf. Matt. iii. 9). A man could thereby summon to his aid the merits of the fathers, and so counterbalance his demerits.

‘It is obvious that such a system does not admit of forgiveness in any spiritual sense of the term. It can only mean in such a connexion a remission of penalty to the offender, on the ground that compensation is furnished, either through his own merit or through that of the righteous fathers. Thus, as Weber vigorously puts it: “Vergebung ohne Bezahlung gibt es nicht.” Thus, according to popular Pharisaism, *God never remitted a debt until He was paid in full, and so long as it was paid it mattered not by whom.*

‘It will be observed that with the Pharisees forgiveness was *an external thing*; it was concerned not with the man himself but with his works—with these indeed as affecting him, but yet as existing independently without him. This was not the view taken by the best thought in the Old Testament. There forgiveness dealt first and chiefly with the direct relation between man’s spirit and God; it was essentially a restoration of man to communion with God. When, therefore, Christianity had to deal with these problems, it could not accept the Pharisaic solutions, but had in some measure to return to the Old Testament to authenticate and develop the highest therein taught, and in the person and life of Christ to give it a world-wide power and comprehensiveness.’

The doctrine called Talmudic in the above extract receives remarkable illustration in a Jewish work, *The*

Apocalypse of Baruch, which dates from the same period as the writings of the New Testament (A.D. 50-100; or if the work be regarded as composite, we should say that its component elements are of that date), and represents to us in a very vivid and touching form the hopes and beliefs of a pious orthodox Jew. Thus—

i. *The doctrine of the merit of good works.* ii. 2 [words spoken to Jeremiah by God], ‘Your works are to this city as a firm pillar.’ xiv. 5: ‘What have they profited who confessed before Thee, and have not walked in vanity as the rest of the nations . . . but always feared Thee, and have not left Thy ways? And, lo, they have been carried off, nor on their account hast Thou had mercy on Zion. And if others did evil, it was due to Zion that on account of the works of those who wrought good works she should be forgiven, and should not be overwhelmed on account of the works of those who wrought unrighteousness.’ lxiii. 3: ‘Hezekiah trusted in his works, and had hope in his righteousness, and spake with the Mighty One . . . and the Mighty One heard him.’ lxxxv. 1: ‘In the generations of old those our fathers had helpers, righteous men and holy prophets . . . and they helped us when we sinned, and they prayed for us to Him who made us, because they trusted in their works, and the Mighty One heard their prayer and was gracious unto us.’ li. 7: ‘But those who have been saved by their works, and to whom the law has been now a hope, and understanding an expectation, and wisdom a confidence, to them wonders will appear in their time.’

It is very noticeable in the above quotations that it is the works of the righteous rather than their persons (as in Genesis xviii. 23-33) that are put forward as the grounds of confidence with God. The claim of righteousness in the second quotation (xiv. 5) may be paralleled in the somewhat earlier work called *The Assumption*

of Moses¹: 'Observe and know that neither did our fathers nor their forefathers tempt God so as to transgress His commandments.'

2. *The doctrine of the treasury of merits.* The good works of the righteous are laid up as in a treasury to avail for themselves and for others. Thus (xiv. 12): 'The righteous justly hope for the end, and without fear depart from this habitation, because they have with Thee a store of works preserved in treasuries.' xxiv. 1: 'Behold the days come when the books will be opened in which are written the sins of all those that have sinned, and again also the treasuries in which the righteousness of all those who have been righteous in creation is gathered.'

The connexion of the mediaeval doctrine of the treasury of merits with the similar Jewish doctrine needs to be traced out.

3. *Righteousness identified with the keeping of the law.* For the Pharisaic Jew righteousness meant simply the keeping of the law. Thus xv. 5: 'Man would not have rightly understood My judgement if he had not accepted the law.' Again, lxvii. 6: 'So far as Zion is delivered up and Jerusalem laid waste . . . the vapour of the smoke of the incense of righteousness which is by the law is extinguished in Zion.' Thus the merits of Abraham are attributed to his having kept the law before it was written. lvii. 2: 'At that time the unwritten law was named among them, and the works of the commandments were then fulfilled.'

Of course it must be said that 'the Law' may mean the ceremonial law, as in the lower form of Jewish thought, or special stress may be laid on its moral precepts, as is the case in Baruch, and in the higher Jewish teaching generally.

¹ Edited also by R. H. Charles (A. and C. Black, 1897), p. 37.

4. *The Gentiles are therefore incapable of righteousness.* lxii. 7: 'But regarding the Gentiles it were tedious to tell how they always wrought impiety and wickedness, and never wrought righteousness.' Thus the best hope of the Gentiles is that in the Messianic kingdom they should become servants to Israel. This will be their lot if they have never vexed the holy people; see lxxii. 2-6.

5. *The world created on account of Israel.* xiv. 18: 'Thou didst say that Thou wouldst make for Thy world man as the administrator of Thy works, that it might be known that he was by no means made on account of the world but the world on account of him. [But "man" is at once interpreted as the Jewish racc.] And now I see that as for the world which was made on account of us, lo! it abides, but we on account of whom it was made depart' [i. e. into captivity]. xv. 7: 'As regards what thou didst say touching the righteous, that on account of them has this world come into being, nay more, even that world which is to come is on their account.' xxi. 23: 'Reprove therefore the angel of death . . . and let the treasuries of souls restore them that are enclosed in them, for there have been many years like those that are desolate, from the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of all those who are like them, who sleep in the earth, on whose account Thou didst say that Thou hadst created the world.' (This idea of the treasury of the souls of the righteous recurs in xxx. 2.) In *The Assumption of Moses* (i. 12) it is said, 'God hath created the world on behalf of His people. But He was not pleased to manifest this purpose of creation from the foundation of the world, in order that the Gentiles might thereby be convicted [i. e. of ignorance], yea to their own humiliation might by their arguments convict one another.'

The above teaching shows us exactly what it was to which St. Paul opposed his doctrine of Justification by

Faith. We see it here on its own ground. Its close association with 'boasting' is apparent even in its better form; and its view of election contrasts, by its selfish narrowness, with the view of election put forward by St. Paul, viz. that God's election of a chosen people or society, together with His apparent reprobation of others left outside, both alike subserve a purpose of infinite width, the ultimate divine purpose to 'have mercy upon all.' See Romans ix-xi, especially xi. 32, and cf. Eph. i. 9-10: 'the secret of His will with a view to the dispensation of the fulness of the times, to bring together all things in the Christ, things in heaven and things in earth.'

The marked contrast between the doctrine of Baruch and the doctrine of St. Paul must of course be admitted in general; but it has been asked whether the doctrine of the Atonement is not a fragment of the abandoned Jewish doctrine of merit, borrowed inconsistently by St. Paul, or inconsistently tolerated by him. To this the reply is surely in the negative. The Jews undoubtedly held that Enoch, Moses, Jeremiah, and others were, on account of their righteousness, the accepted mediators with God on behalf of the chosen people, and propitiators of His wrath (see especially *Assumption of Moses*, xi, and passages from *Baruch* cited above). But the doctrine of the Atonement, when it is examined, proves to have one feature which puts it into marked opposition with the Judaic doctrine of human merit.

According to the Christian doctrine of the Atonement, Christ is purely and simply God's gift to man. He is the Son of God, given to man by the Father, in order that, taking our nature upon Him, living the perfect human life, and dying the death of perfect obedience, He might satisfy the divine requirement, which we could not satisfy, and procure for us what we could not procure for ourselves, no, not the best of us. Therefore this doctrine

puts all men, the best and worst alike, in the common attitude of simply receiving from God, as an unmerited boon, the gift of forgiveness and reconciliation in Christ. It is in fact the strongest possible negation of the Jewish idea of human merit, personal or vicarious.

In other respects the doctrine of *The Apocalypse of Baruch* affords at once interesting contrasts and parallels to St. Paul's doctrine. Thus—

(a) In Baruch as in St. Paul, we have a combination of the doctrine of divine predestination with the insistence on human free will and responsibility. lxix. 4: 'Of the good works of the righteous which should be accomplished before Him, He foresaw six kinds' should be compared with Eph. ii. 10: 'Good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.'

(b) The eschatology of the New Testament, including St. Paul's, is of course especially Jewish. It does not however concern us much in the Epistle to the Ephesians; but we notice that in *The Apocalypse of Baruch* the idea of 'the consummation of the times' (cf. Eph. i. 10, 'the fulness of the times') appears and reappears constantly. See xiii. 3; xxi. 8, 17; xxx. 3; xlii. 6; liv. 21; lvi. 2; lix. 4; lxix. 4, 5; cf. *The Assumption of Moses*, i. 18: 'The consummation of the end of the days.'

(c) The connexion of St. Paul's doctrine with the Jewish doctrine is also illustrated in *The Apocalypse of Baruch* on the following points. *That the Gentiles had the opportunity of the knowledge of God through His works in nature, but refused it.* See Baruch, liv. 18, and cf. Romans, i. 20: *The pre-existence of the Messiah.* This is suggested but not very clearly stated in xxx. 1, cf. Charles's note and *The Assumption of Moses*, i. 14, where the pre-existence of Moses seems to be asserted. Again, *the Fall of Adam and its effect in introducing death (or premature death) into the world.* See xxiii. 4; xlviii. 42; liv. 15; lvi. 6, and

Charles's notes. Once more *The Resurrection of the Body*. See *Baruch*, i; li. On all these points we see what was the material in existing Jewish thought or, in other words, what were the existing developments of Old Testament belief, which the Christian inspiration had to work upon. The effect of the specifically Christian inspiration is chiefly seen (1) in selection among existing beliefs—taking some and utterly rejecting others; (2) in giving a definite and fixed form to current Messianic and other ideas which were continually shifting and incoherent; and (3) in spiritualizing and moralizing what it appropriated. Of course it is in the Revelation or Apocalypse of St. John that we have the most signal instance of the New Testament use of contemporary Jewish material. But such material holds a very large place in the whole of the New Testament, and there is no more important assistance to the study of the New Testament than is afforded by contemporary Jewish literature, especially that of an Apocalyptic character.

NOTE D. See p. 120.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW

After the above passage was written, as to the need amongst us of a deeper idea of the obligations of church membership, it fell to my lot to go to the United States, to make acquaintance with the work of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew in that country, and to assist at its general convention in Buffalo. It seemed to me that nothing could be better calculated to revive the true spirit of laymanship than that society, 'formed in recognition of

the fact that every Christian man is pledged to devote his life to the spread of the kingdom of Christ on earth.'

It was started among a small band of young men, of the number of the apostles, nearly fifteen years ago, in St. James's parish, Chicago, and has spread till to-day it numbers more than 1,200 parochial chapters in the United States alone, and has taken firm root in Canada and other parts of the world. It has a double rule of Prayer and of Service. The point of the service required is that it should have the character especially of witness among a man's equals. So much 'church work' is directed towards raising those who are in some ways our inferiors, that we forget that the real test of a man is the witness he bears for Christ among his equals. There is many a man who, especially in his youth, fails to confess Christ in his own society, and then, if I may so express it, sneaks round the corner to do something to raise the degraded or takes orders and preaches the gospel. Nobody can possibly disparage these efforts of love, but a certain character of cowardice continues to attach to them, if they are not based on a frank witness for Christ in a man's own walk of life, where it is hardest. It is this witness which the Brotherhood requires.

The particular rule is 'to make an earnest effort each week to bring some one young man within hearing of the Gospel of Christ as set forth in the services of the Church and in men's Bible classes.' This rule is no doubt open to criticism. But it is interpreted in the spirit rather than in the letter, and for its definite requirement it is successfully pleaded that it keeps the members from vagueness and slackness.

Certainly the result appears to be excellent. The brethren are pervaded by a spirit of frank religious profession and devotion. There appears to be a general

tone among them of reality and good sense. Their missionary zeal does not degenerate into an intrusive prying into other men's souls.

The Brotherhood was developed in the atmosphere of the United States, and it remains a question whether it will flourish in England. The more sharply defined distinctions of classes among us; our exaggerated parochialism; the shyness and reserve in religious matters which characterizes many really religious Englishmen and degenerates into a sort of 'hypocrisy reversed,' or pretence of being less religious than one is—these things will constitute grave obstacles. But the need is at least as crying among us, as on the other side of the Atlantic, to emphasize among professing Christians and churchmen the duty of *witness*. At least we may trust the Brotherhood will be given a good trial. But if it is to have a fair chance among us, the greatest care must be taken that it should develop as a properly lay movement; and while it receives all encouragement from the clergy, should not be taken up by them to be turned into a guild of 'church workers,' useful for purposes of parochial organization.

One of the most striking facts about the Brotherhood in the States is that, while the church spirit is unmistakable—as no one who was present at the corporate Communion of 1,300 delegates in October of this year at half-past six in the morning in a great church at Buffalo could possibly doubt—it has successfully avoided becoming either a party society or a society rent by factions.

It is because I believe the witness of this Brotherhood to the true church spirit has already proved invaluable that I venture to dedicate this little exposition of the great book of brotherhood—though without leave granted or asked—to its founder and president.

NOTE E. See pp. 164, 166.

THE CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH (CATHOLIC) IN ST. PAUL
IN ITS RELATION TO LOCAL CHURCHES.

By far the most frequent use of the word 'church' or 'churches' in the New Testament is to designate a local society of Christians or a number of such societies taken together, 'the church at Jerusalem,' 'the church at Antioch,' 'the churches of Galatia,' 'the seven churches which are in Asia,' 'all the churches.' But it is used also for the church as a whole. In fact, before Christ's coming the word in the Greek of the Old Testament had passed from meaning an assembly of the people, as in classical Greek, to meaning the sacred people as a whole¹, as St. Stephen uses it in his speech 'The church in the wilderness' (Acts vii. 38). And it is exactly in this sense that it is used by our Lord in St. Matthew, xvi. 18. 'The church' which our Lord there promises to 'build' is the Church of the New Covenant as a whole. We might paraphrase His words (as Dr. Hort suggests²) 'on this rock I will build my Israel.' Thus there is throughout the Acts and St. Paul's earlier epistles, a tendency to pass from the use of 'church' as a local society to its use as designating the whole body of the faithful. This was but natural seeing that each local society did but represent the one divine society, the church of the Old Covenant, refounded by Christ. See Acts ix. 31: 'The church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria.'

¹ *Not*, as Dr. Hort points out (*Christian Ecclesia*, p. 5), 'the elect (called-out) people.' The word has in fact no such association attached to it.

² pp. 10, 11.

xii. 1: 'Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church.' xx. 28: 'The church of God which he purchased with his own blood.' Gal. i. 13: 'I persecuted the church of God.' 1 Cor. xii. 28: 'God hath set some in the church, first apostles,' &c. In this last passage and in St. Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders this general use of the term is unmistakable.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, in which alone among his epistles St. Paul is writing not about the difficulties or needs of a particular congregation, but about the church in its general conception, this larger use of the term becomes dominant. And the point to be noticed is that the church in general, or catholic church, is conceived of, not as made up of local churches, but as made up of individual members. The local church would be regarded by St. Paul not as one element of a catholic confederacy¹, but as the local representative of the one divine and catholic society². But the local church is not, according to St. Paul, a completely independent representative of the church as a whole. The apostles, as commissioned witnesses and representatives of Christ, are over all the churches. They, or their recognized associates and delegates, like Barnabas, Timothy and Titus, represent the general church which every local church must, so to speak, reproduce. The apostles therefore, or their representatives, give to each church when it is first founded 'the tradition' of truth and morals which is permanently to mould it; and they maintain the tradition by a more or less constant supervision. Thus they are

¹ Unless indeed, in Eph. iii. 21, we should understand 'every building' as meaning every local church which, fitted together with every other, grows into a holy temple, i. e. into that which only a really catholic church can be.

² The same statement would be true of St. Ignatius of Antioch.

the force which holds all 'the churches' together on a common basis. 'So ordain I,' says St. Paul, 'in all the churches¹.' 'Hold fast the traditions even as I delivered them to you².' The apostle has, he teaches, an 'authority' commensurate with his 'stewardship³,' an authority 'which the Lord gave for the edification and not the destruction⁴' of the Christians, but which at times must take the form of a 'rod' of chastisement⁵. The complete doctrinal and moral independence of particular Churches is strongly denied by St. Paul in such phrases as 'Came the word of God unto you alone?' or, 'If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema⁶.'

Dr. Hort's work on *The Christian Ecclesia*, in many respects, as would be expected, most admirable, seems to me to minimize quite extraordinarily the apostolic authority. The apostles, he says, were only witnesses of Christ. 'There is no trace in Scripture of a formal commission of authority for government from Christ Himself.' This surprising conclusion is reached by omitting many considerations. Thus in St. Matthew xvi. 19 a definite grant of official authority—as appears in the passage, Is. xxii. 22, on which it is based—is promised to St. Peter, and he is on this occasion, as Dr. Hort himself maintains, the representative of the apostles generally. This stewardship granted to the apostles, to shepherd the flock and feed the household of God, is implied again in St. Luke xii. 42, St. John xxi. 15-17; and it seems to be quite unreasonable to dissociate the authoritative commission to 'absolve and retain,' St. John xx. 20-23, from the apostolic office. Dr. Hort would apparently

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 17.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 17.

⁵ 1 Cor. iv. 21.

² 1 Cor. xi. 2, xv. 2.

⁴ 2 Cor. x. 8.

⁶ 1 Cor. xiv. 36; Gal. i. 8.

dissociate such passages as those last referred to from the apostolic office, and assign them to the church as a whole. But how then does he account for the authority inherent in the apostolic office, as it is represented by St. Paul, and in the Acts? St. Paul's conception of the authority of the apostles is barely considered by him; and the authority of the apostolate in the Acts is strangely minimized. Nothing is said of Simon's impression—surely a true one—that the apostles had the 'authority' to convey the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands (viii. 19). Certainly the phrases used toward the churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, 'to whom we gave no commandment,' 'it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things,' imply a governmental authority, which, if it is shared by the presbyters, is substantially that of the apostles (Acts xv. 24-28).

Dr. Hort also minimizes greatly the element of official authority which appears almost at once in the church by apostolic appointment and delegation. No doubt there was at first an authority allowed—as must always be allowed—to the acknowledged possessors of extraordinary divine gifts, especially to the 'prophets.' But in the period of St. Paul's later activity, when he is facing the future of the church and has apparently ceased to expect an immediate return of Christ, these special gifts retire into the background, while the ordinary functions of government, and administration of the word and sacraments, remain in the position which they are permanently to occupy in the hands of regularly ordained officers.

Dr. Hort deals, as it seems to me, most unreasonably with the pastoral epistles. It is surely arbitrary to dissociate 'the gift which was in Timothy by the laying on of St. Paul's hands,' the gift of 'power, and love, and discipline' which Timothy is to 'stir up' (2 Tim. i. 6), from

that mentioned in the first epistle (iv. 14), 'the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbyters'; and to make the former a 'gift' of merely personal piety. And (even if the 'lay hands suddenly on no man' be interpreted, as Ellicott and Hort would interpret it, of the reception of a penitent) it seems absurd to doubt, in view of what is said about the laying on of hands in ordination of 'the seven' and of the 'evangelist' Timothy, and in view of the place it held generally for conveying spiritual gifts in the Christian Church, that this was the accepted method of ordination in all cases; there being in fact no evidence to the contrary.

Once more, Dr. Hort is surely maintaining an impossible position when, even in face of the salutation to the Philippians, he denies that the term 'episcopus' is used in the New Testament as a regular title of an ecclesiastical office.

Not even Dr. Hort's reputation for soundness of judgement could stand against many posthumous publications such as *The Christian Ecclesia*.

NOTE F. See p. 188.

THE ETHICS OF CATHOLICISM.

The world at large is fully aware of the claim of 'Catholicism,' i.e. the claim of the one visible church for all sorts of men. But the ethical meaning of the claim has been strangely subordinated to its theological and sacerdotal aspects. Its ethical meaning seems to me to require developing under heads such as these:—

1. The requirement of mutual forbearance if men of all races and classes and idiosyncrasies are to be bound

to belong to one organization and to worship in common, 'breaking the one bread.' Herein lies the moral discipline of catholicism: see above, pp. 123 foll.

2. The consequent obligation of toleration in theology, ritual, &c., on all matters which do not touch the actual basis of the Christian faith. St. Cyprian, though he believed that those baptized outside the church were not baptized at all, yet deliberately remained in communion with those bishops who thought differently, trusting to the mercy of God to supply the supposed deficiency in those who, outside his jurisdiction, were admitted into the church, as he believed, without baptism. And St. Augustine, who, most of ancient writers, understands the moral meaning of Catholicism, repeatedly holds up this toleration of Cyprian as an example to the Donatist separatists of his own day: 'If you seek advice from the blessed Cyprian, hear how much he anticipates from the mere advantage of unity: so much so that he did not separate himself from those who held different opinions: and, though he thought that those who are baptized outside the communion of the church do not receive baptism at all, yet he believed that those who had thus been simply *admitted* into the church could on no other ground than the bond of unity come under the divine pardon.' Then he quotes Cyprian's words: 'But some one will say: what will happen to those who in the past, when coming from heresy to the church, have been admitted without baptism? (I reply): God is powerful to grant them forgiveness by His mercy, and not to separate from the gifts of His church those who, after being thus simply admitted into her, have fallen asleep.' And again: 'judging no man and separating no man from the rights of communion because he thinks differently.' And St. Augustine continues: 'All these catholic

unity embraces in her motherly bosom, bearing one another's burdens in turn and endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, until, in whatever respect they disagreed, the Lord should reveal (the truth) to one or the other of them¹. Not to St. Paul then, only, but to St. Cyprian and St. Augustine, doctrinal toleration is an essential of Catholicism. Would to God the claim of the one church had not come to be associated so generally with the opposite tendency! See above, pp. 158 f.

3. Catholicism, as meaning a church of all races and sorts of people, postulates a constant missionary enthusiasm in all the members of the church till this ideal be realized. 'To do the work of an evangelist,' to have the 'feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace,' to be content to leave nothing but evil outside the church—that is to be a real catholic.

4. To St. Paul's mind the catholicism of the church is to lead the way to an even wider 'reconciliation.' Through the catholic union of men in the church the whole universe is to come back into unity. The kingdom of God is to be something wider than the church which exists to prepare for it. This principle once recognized secures that the church shall feel and exhibit a constant interest in all departments of knowledge and progress. The universe is one, and redemption is for the whole.

5. Catholicism is the antithesis of esotericism. All—men and women, slave or free, Greek or Scythian—are capable of full initiation into Christianity. All—not apostles and presbyter-bishops and deacons only—but all Christians make up the high priestly body and have on their foreheads the anointing oil: see above, pp. 111 ff.

Forbearance between divergent classes and races and individuals—doctrinal toleration—missionary enthu-

¹ S. Aug. *de Baptismo*, ii. [xiii.] 18, [xiv.] 20.

siasm—universal sympathy—recognition of a universal priesthood of Christianity—these constitute the moral content of Pauline catholicism.

NOTE G. See p. 190.

THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE AND INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS.

The 'Report of the Committee of the Lambeth Conference appointed to consider and report upon the office of the Church with respect to industrial problems—(a) the unemployed; (b) industrial co-operation,' is so much to the point as a statement of Christian social duty that I venture to reproduce the *first part of it* here.

'The Committee desire to begin their Report with words of thankful recognition that throughout the Church of Christ, and not least in the Churches of our own Communion, there has been a marked increase of solicitude about the problems of industrial and social life, and of sympathy with the struggles, sufferings, responsibilities, and anxieties, which those problems involve.

'They hope that they rightly discern in this some increasing reflection in modern shape of the likeness of the Lord, in whose blessed life zeal for the souls, and sympathy for the bodily needs of men were undivided fruits of a single love.

'The Committee, before proceeding to touch upon two specific parts of the subject, desire to record briefly what they deem to be certain principles of Christian duty in such matters.

'The primary duty of the Church, as such, and, within her, of the Clergy, is that of ministry to men in the things of character, conscience, and faith. In doing this, she also does her greatest social duty. Character in the

citizen is the first social need ; character, with its securities in a candid, enlightened, and vigorous conscience, and a strong faith in goodness and in God. The Church owes this duty to all classes alike. Nothing must be allowed to distract her from it, or needlessly to impede or prejudice her in its discharge ; and this requires of the Clergy, as spiritual officers, the exercise of great discretion in any attempt to bring within their sphere work of a more distinctively social kind.

‘ But while this cannot be too strongly said, it is not the whole truth. Character is influenced at every point by social conditions ; and active conscience, in an industrial society, will look for moral guidance on industrial matters.

‘ Economic science does not claim to give this, its task being to inform but not to determine the conscience and judgement. But we believe that Christ our Master does give such guidance by His example and teachings, and by the present workings of His Spirit ; and therefore under Him Christian authority must in a measure do the same, the authority, that is, of the whole Christian body, and of an enlightened Christian opinion. This is part of the duty of the Christian Society, as witnessing for Christ and representing Him in this present world, occupied with His work of setting up the Kingdom of God, under and amidst the natural conditions of human life. In this work the clergy, whose special duty it is to ponder the bearings of Christian principles, have their part ; but the Christian laity, who deal directly with the social and economic facts, can do even more.

‘ The Committee believe that it would be wholly wrong for Christian authority to attempt to interfere with the legitimate evolution of economic and social thought and life by taking a side corporately in the debates between rival social theories or systems. It will not (for example),

at the present day, attempt to identify Christian duty with the acceptance of systems based respectively on collective or individual ownership of the means of production.

‘But they submit that Christian social duty will operate in two directions :—

‘1. The recognition, inculcation, and application of certain Christian principles. They offer the following as examples :—

- (a) The principle of Brotherhood. This principle of Brotherhood, or Fellowship in Christ, proclaiming, as it does, that men are members one of another, should act in all the relations of life as a constant counterpoise to the instinct of competition.
- (b) The principle of Labour. That every man is bound to service—the service of God and man. Labour and service are to be here understood in their widest and most inclusive sense ; but in some sense they are obligatory on all. The wilfully idle man, and the man who lives only for himself, are out of place in a Christian community. Work, accordingly, is not to be looked upon as an irksome necessity for some, but as the honourable task and privilege of all.
- (c) The principle of Justice. God is no respecter of persons. Inequalities, indeed, of every kind are inwoven with the whole providential order of human life, and are recognized emphatically in our Lord’s words. But the social order cannot ignore the interests of any of its parts, and must, moreover, be tested by the degree in which it secures for each freedom for happy, useful, and untrammelled life, and distributes, as widely and equitably as may be, social advantages and opportunities.
- (d) The principle of Public Responsibility. A Christian community, as a whole, is morally responsible for

the character of its own economic and social order, and for deciding to what extent matters affecting that order are to be left to individual initiative, and to the unregulated play of economic forces. Factory and sanitary legislation, the institution of Government labour departments and the influence of Government, or of public opinion and the press, or of eminent citizens, in helping to avoid or reconcile industrial conflicts, are instances in point.

‘2. Christian opinion should be awake to repudiate and condemn either open breaches of social justice and duty, or maxims and principles of an un-Christian character. It ought to condemn the belief that economic conditions are to be left to the action of material causes and mechanical laws, uncontrolled by any moral responsibility. It can pronounce certain conditions of labour to be intolerable. It can insist that the employer’s personal responsibility, as such, is not lost by his membership in a commercial or industrial Company. It can press upon retail purchasers the obligation to consider not only the cheapness of the goods supplied to them, but also the probable conditions of their production. It can speak plainly of evils which attach to the economic system under which we live, such as certain forms of luxurious extravagance, the widespread pursuit of money by financial gambling, the dishonesties of trade into which men are driven by feverish competition, and the violences and reprisals of industrial warfare.

‘It is plain that in these matters disapproval must take every different shade, from plain condemnation of undoubted wrong to tentative opinions about better and worse. Accordingly any organic action of the Church, or any action of the Church’s officers, as such, should be very carefully restricted to cases where the rule of right is practically clear, and much the larger part of the matter

should be left to the free and flexible agency of the awakened Christian conscience of the community at large, and of its individual members.

‘If the Christian conscience be thus awakened and active, it will secure the best administration of particular systems, while they exist, and the modification or change of them, when this is required by the progress of knowledge, thought, and life.

‘It appears to follow from what precedes that the great need of the Church, in this connexion, is the growth and extension of a serious, intelligent, and sympathetic opinion on these subjects, to which numberless Christians have as yet never thought of applying Christian principles. There has been of late no little improvement in this respect, but much remains to be done, and with this view the Committee desire to make the following definite recommendation.

‘They suggest that, wherever possible, there should be formed, as a part of local Church organization, Committees consisting chiefly of laymen, whose work should be to study social and industrial problems from the Christian point of view, and to assist in creating and strengthening an enlightened public opinion in regard to such problems, and promoting a more active spirit of social service, as a part of Christian duty.

‘Such Committees, or bodies of Church workers in the way of social service, while representing no one class of society, and abstaining from taking sides in any disputes between classes, should fearlessly draw attention to the various causes in our economic, industrial, and social system, which call for remedial measures on Christian principles.’

Abundant illustration of the kind of matters with which such Committees might deal will be found in the report.

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